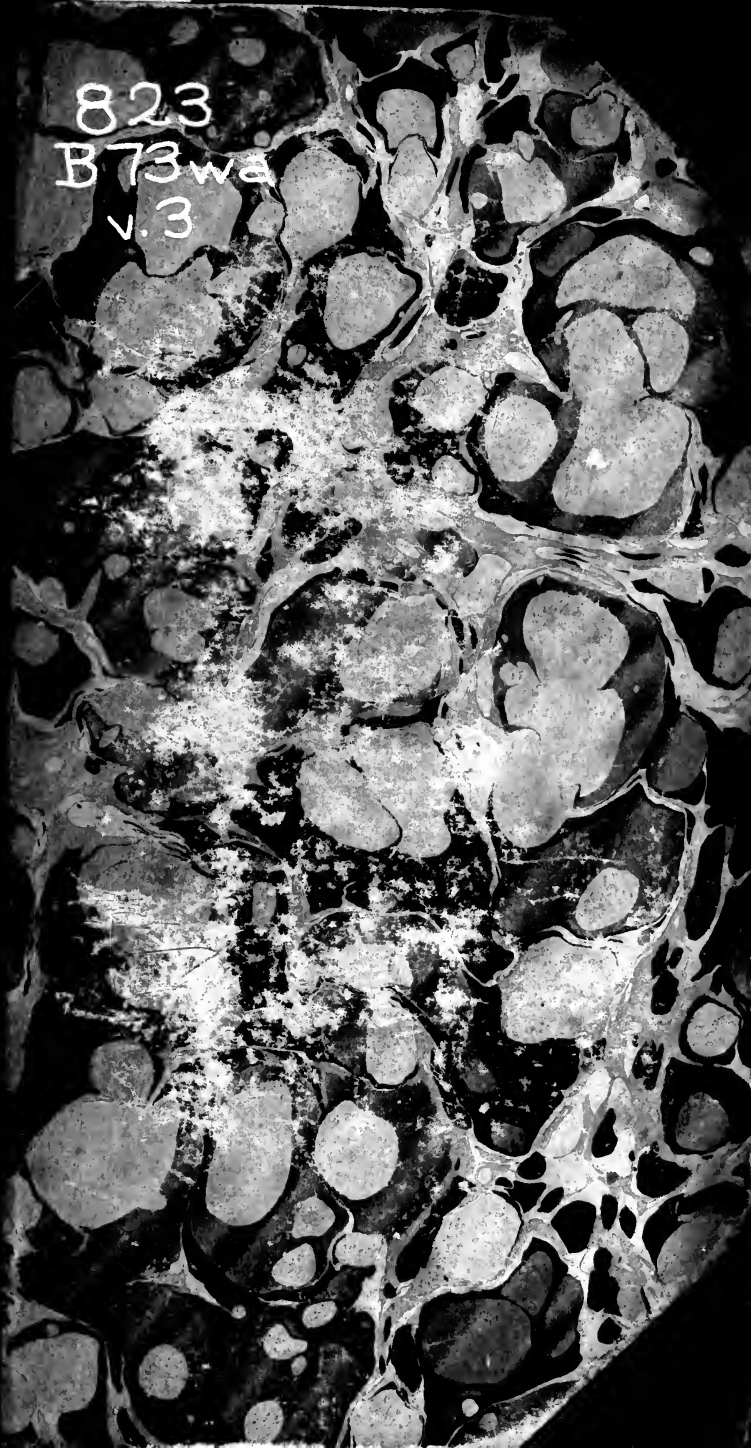
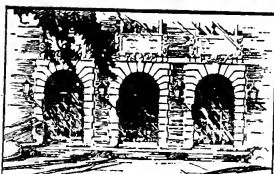


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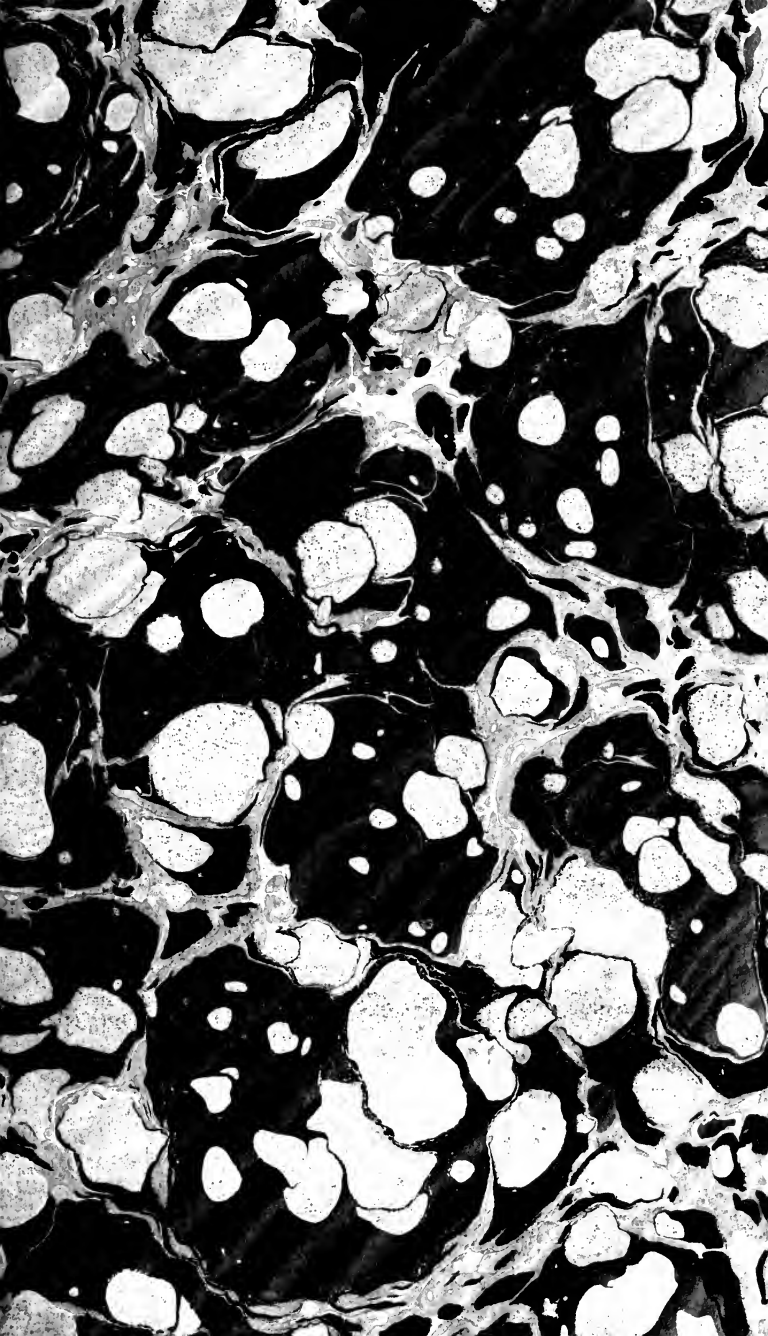


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John Bentall







WARLEIGH ;
OR,
THE FATAL OAK.

VOL. III.

LONDON :
Printed by A. SPOTTISWOODE,
New-Street-Square.

WARLEIGH;

OR,

THE FATAL OAK.

A Legend of Devon.

BY
MRS. BRAY,
AUTHOR OF "FITZ OF FITZ-FORD," "THE TALBA,"
"THE WHITE HOODS," "DE FOIX," &c. &c.

———— "Many a tale
Traditionary round the mountains hung,
And many a legend peopling the dark woods
Nourish'd Imagination in her growth."
Excursion, Book 1.

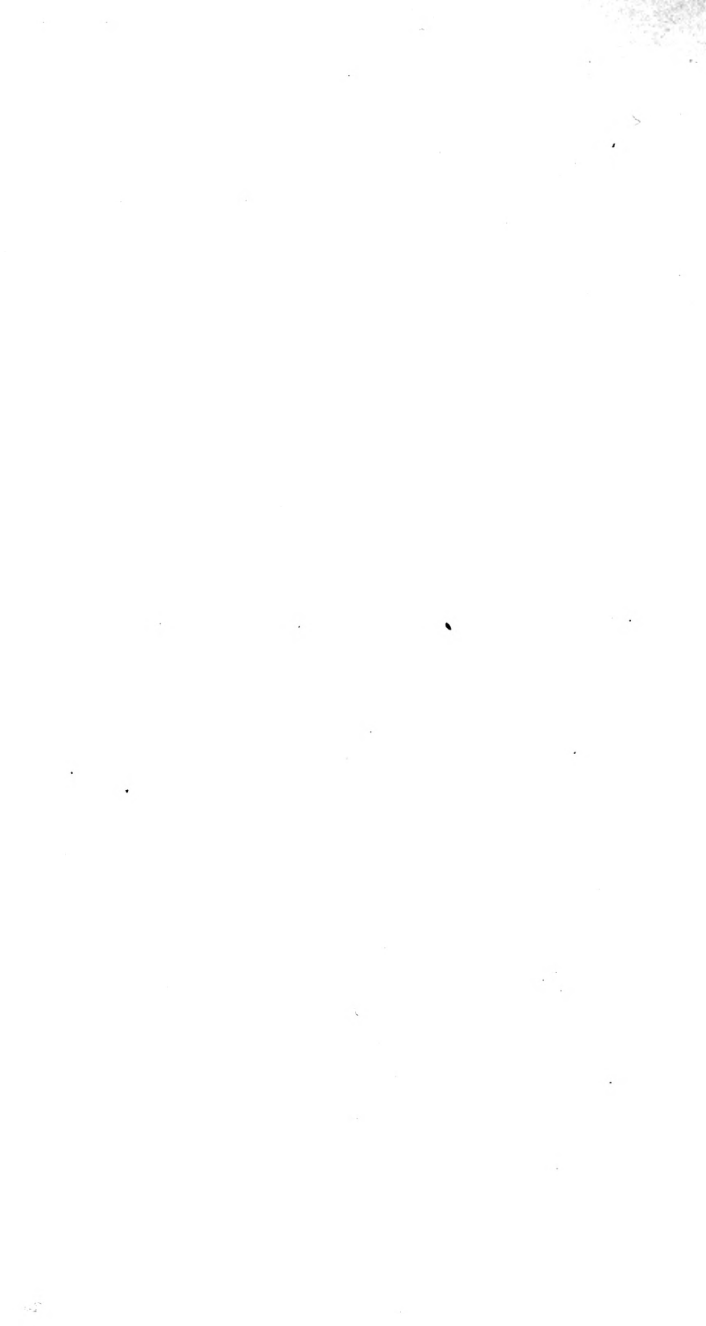
IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR
LONGMAN, REES, ORME, BROWN, GREEN, & LONGMAN,
PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1834.



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V. 3.

WARLEIGH.

CHAPTER I.

— Shall the figure of God's majesty,
His captain, steward, deputy elect,
Anointed, crown'd, and planted many years,
Be judg'd by subjects and inferior breath?

— Never alone
Did the King sigh, but with a general groan.

SHAKSPEARE.

THE scene of our narrative now shifts to Warleigh, where, about two or three weeks after the events had occurred which formed the subject of our last chapters, Sir John Copplestone was one day seated in his own private apartment, busied over papers, and wearing in his countenance an expression of uneasiness and deep thought more than was usual with him.

His mind was at this hour exceedingly dis-

turbed, since he was playing a deep game in the busy events of the time, and was far advanced in the mazes of plot, enterprise, and intrigue. These designs he felt, if executed with success, would make him great beyond all the former hopes of his wily ambition; but that if they failed, he was likely to sink for ever in his worldly fortunes. In this frame of mind he heard with considerable perturbation that a person waited in the hall to see him, who came charged with letters he was to deliver into no hands save his own. Sir John ordered that he should be instantly admitted; and soon after the honest and trusted Cornet Davy walked into the room.

Sir John received him with cold civility, and bade him be seated; but no sooner had the servant who guided him thither retired, than Copplestone suddenly rose up, locked the door, peeped behind the arras, and having seen that all the coast was clear, and that none but himself and the Cornet occupied the chamber, he exclaimed, in a tone of eagerness, "Thou hast brought me letters, — I guess from whom; the

good knight, thy worthy master, has despatched them to me: he is by this time in the Isle of Wight?"

"No, he is not," said Cornet Davy; "he is in Somersetshire, and goes for Salisbury."

"Not in the Isle of Wight! goes for Salisbury! what may this mean?" exclaimed Coplestone, as a lurking feeling of suspicion was, in a moment, roused into action by hearing a thing so contrary to his expectations. "I had thought *that* matter was arranged between us without fear of revocation, and that nothing would have stayed Sir Hugh at such a time."

"What may have produced this change in his road, I know not," said the Cornet; "but I can answer for it, there is no change in his purpose. There is his letter for you, Sir John: I have already been the bearer of one to Sir Piers Edgcumbe; for only last night the packet arrived from my master: I was charged to deliver every letter myself, since he would trust no other hand. Yours, no doubt, will tell all particulars; but I know all the business, since

my good master wrote also to me with the cipher that is between us."

"And what said he?" enquired Sir John, as he broke the seal of his own letter; "your news, no doubt, tallies with mine. Thou art an honest, trusted fellow, and shall be well rewarded, for thou deservest all that can be done for thee hereafter. Sit thee down; I will read these the while."

Cornet Davy took his seat, as Sir John Coplestone read with the most rivetted attention the letter put into his hands from Sir Hugh Piper. After doing so, he was silent for a moment, and then, fixing his dark eye on the Cornet, exclaimed in a tone of exultation, "Thy news is great, indeed! if this prospers England's hope shall once more, like the phoenix of old, rise, bright and glorious, from its ashes. All is prepared?"

"It is," replied Cornet Davy; "and may God bring it to a happy issue."

"It cannot fail, I think it cannot fail," said Coplestone. "Charles Stuart knows of our purpose—that his friends watch for the hour of

his deliverance, even as Moses watched for that which should lead forth the Israelites from bondage. Are all the gentlemen, our fast friends and allies, prepared and warned for this great enterprise? its final issue will rest on their fidelity."

"Sir Piers Edgcumbe and Sir William Bastard will not fail to warn them," said the Cornet.

"And Burley," said Coppelstone; "Burley, at the time here stated in this letter, rises in the Isle of Wight on the sudden, to free Charles from his prison. He flies to the west: an armed force in Cornwall and Devon, now secretly, but surely, preparing to receive him, unite at a given signal; the governor of Plymouth Castle promises to yield that strong fortress to the King. Exeter will also yield; and Charles, appearing on the sudden, plants his standard once more in the west. His presence will rouse all hearts in generous emulation to support his cause. The fire will spread; and by our example Cornwall and Devon shall become as beacon-lights to England's loyalty."

“So it is hoped,” said Cornet Davy: “the King’s escape to France is impossible, for there is not a pinnace, not a cock boat, nor a fisher’s bark, but, if put off towards the French coast, is chased and searched. The King must escape by Southampton: all is ready for him. Burley’s plan is surely laid; it seems impossible that it should fail: the day, the very hour is named for delivering the King from Carisbrook Castle, and no delay will take place, so well is all arranged.”

“It is,” replied Copplestone; “and on the twentieth of June, so I learn from this letter, all the gentlemen who take the lead in this enterprise meet in Warleigh Hall, to determine on the day of open revolt from those tyrannical powers who now chasten England with the iron scourge of rebellion and of wrath.”

“It is so agreed,” said the Cornet: “on the twentieth of June they will meet, and here, since your house, Sir John, is their only secure place for such a meeting, on account of your standing unsuspected by the parliament. You once belonged to that party?”

“I did,” answered Copplesstone; “but I was then in the gall of bitterness, in the darkness of Egypt; a poor misguided Israelite in the house of bondage. I had never joined them could I have foreseen to what extremities they would drive on matters with the King, when he so freely yielded to all their just grievances. Could I but have dreamed that they would lay violent hands upon him, and imprison their anointed king, I had died rather than have taken part with such villany; but I repent me, as did Ahasuerus when he commanded the death of all the Jews; and I, like him, who helped an evil work, will now join, heart and hand, to seek deliverance from it. No man, I think, doubts my purpose of doing good service to Charles Stuart.”

“Had you given only fair words, Sir John,” said Cornet Davy, “all men would have doubted it; but your fair deeds have been your warrant. The large sums you have advanced to buy arms and raise men are worth a thousand professions. No loyalist gentleman doubts you, who have not spared your purse in the King’s cause.”

“ Nor my prayers either,” said Copplestone, “ since to give money alone were a deed of little worth, unless, like Cornelius, the prayers brought a blessing on the gift. I am not the first man, it should be remembered, who, on seeing to what lengths the parliament drove matters, has taken part with the oppressed king. General Chudleigh went farther than ever I did with them, for he fought under the Earl of Stamford at Stratton heights; yet how soon after did he return to his allegiance, and no man did better service to the crown. Sir William Waller had never been routed at Roundway Down, but for his return to the royal cause. Rupert and Maurice, those twin stars of royalty, both honoured him; and Sir Ralph Hopton, who was never prone to praise doubtful men, or to welcome back a halting royalist, yet even he said that Charles had in Chudleigh recovered one of the bravest and best soldiers that ever won a field. Did I need farther example I might cite the Earls of Bedford, of Holland, and of Clare, who all returned, with true allegiance, to the King at Oxford.”

“ Yes,” said Cornet Davy, in his accustomed blunt manner; “ but be it, also, remembered, Sir John, that they came back to his majesty when the parliament had the worst of it, after the siege of Bristol; when that city was bought at a price, to my thinking beyond its worth — for Slannning and Trevannion, those noble western gentlemen, fell before its walls. After Bristol’s surrender, when the King’s affairs looked bright, like a summer sky after a storm, then came back those same wheedling lords and earls, and made legs at Oxford to the King, fearing lest their heads might bow, instead of their knees, on a block on Tower Hill. But to speak my mind to you, Sir John Copplestone, I should place no more reliance on your return to the good cause, than I would on a Jew broker’s bond, or on an usurer’s table of interest, if you had not given something better, by way of assurance, than the example of those same lords.”

“ They were men of note and honour,” said Copplestone.

“ Ay,” cried Davy, “ but inconstant as the

wind ; for every one of them turned back again to the parliament after Newbury fight, where Sunderland, Carnarvon, and the great Falkland bit the dust, leaving all England to mourn for them in tears of blood. I cannot think of it even now without a feeling about my heart that would almost make an old rough soldier, like myself, play the woman."

" They were as pearls of honour, indeed, in the King's crown," said Copplestone ; " and as for those same changeling lords, they came back again to Charles, as spring does to the earth, to bask in the warm beams of the returning sun, for the King's fortunes then began to smile upon him. But I would bid you bear in mind, that I have returned to the King in his adversity ; and that whilst he, though a crowned prince of three great kingdoms, lies a prisoner, poor, heart-broken, and oppressed, I have sought him sorrowing, and have not spared to risk life, fortune, all I have, to serve him ; and without I had done this, where would those gallant leaders of the west have found the means to encourage or to organise their plan ?"

“ Sir John Copplestone,” said the Cornet, as he held out his hand, his eyes glistening with the warmth of his own feelings as he spoke,—
“ Sir John, you have declared the truth; you have done all you say, and I honour you for it. You have been the great treasurer to the King’s cause; and I hope every item of the running account between you may be fairly noted, and the sum total have honourable acquittance, so soon as his majesty shall once more enjoy the privilege of raising money without asking every penny of a grudging parliament, like a poor bankrupt who stands before his commission. I am at your command to bear any letters or messages; for as long as I have breath and being, I hold neither so much my own, but that they should both be spent in the service of the King and my master, Sir Hugh Piper, as noble-hearted a gentleman as ever took rebel by the beard. And if Burley should but succeed in his plan, who knows but that on the twentieth day of June, the royal bird having slipt the cage, we may ——”

“ On that day,” said Copplestone, interrupt-

ing him, “welcome Charles the First, King of England, to Warleigh’s ancient halls ! He shall be right welcome.”

“It is a glorious hope,” said the Cornet ; “but that I have so much to do to further it, I would pray day and night that no cross or let may start up from the devil to disappoint such a royal plan of enterprise. It will confer such honour on our old county of Devon as she never dreamed of—to become the King’s deliverer ! the land that rescues, that shelters him from a prison, whilst her best and her bravest rise, to a man, in his cause ! Thank Heaven there’s no Sir Richard Grenville now to step in and spoil all, by getting drunk when he should be getting battles, and wasting men and means in night brawls and private quarrels. We shall all smile, like our own green hills, when ’t is over, and there shall be no tears but what the clouds, here, let fall so plentifully, and even they will be for joy.”

“And to finish thy fanciful phrase,” said Sir John Copplestone, “I will add that our own evergreen laurels and myrtles shall be worn in

our men's bonnets as symbols of victory and peace. Will that content thee?"

"Oh, most rarely," cried the zealous Cornet: "I would have none sorrow but the rascally roundheads; and those cursed old gaols and castles, and foul-aired, crammed prison-ships, where so many gallant royalists now lie like dogs and slaves, why it were meet that the puritans, and the army agitators, took their turn in them, to try how they liked the fare they had so long provided for others. And then we shall have bishops again, and once more say our prayers like sober men, as some worthy silver-haired divine reads the liturgy; and not go about, as of late, to talk to the Almighty in the language of raving Bedlamites and fanatics, who tell him the news from their very pulpits, as if he could not find it out without their commentary. We will have again all the good old times."

"And that we may," said Sir John Copplestone, "I would counsel thee to lose no moment in warning all whom it may concern of the stated day and hour of our meeting. Thou

hast other letters that must be speedily delivered, no doubt of it."

"I have one for Sir William Bastard," replied the Cornet. "Sir William has had a quarrel with some of Butler's men—a quarrel at his very doors, when powder and lead was exchanged, by way of compliment, between them."

"It was rash, most rash, and ill-advised," said Copplestone; "to brawl in private quarrels at such a crisis is mere madness. The affray began, as I heard, about some offence given by Sir William to the parliament troopers, for having made free with his cattle. I have effected a present peace for him; else might this foolish brawl have marred all our hopes. Sir William will meet the gentlemen at Warleigh on the twentieth of June?"

"No doubt," said the Cornet; "for he is like a good, trusty piece that never hangs fire in a moment of need. Sir John Copplestone, I take my leave; and when we next meet, I trust it will be to hail the King's liberation from prison."

“ I hope as much,” said Copplestone: “ commend me to Sir Piers and thy worthy master ; fare ye well.”

The Cornet departed full of high hopes and anxious desires for the success of that cause which he was ready to support at the risk of his own life ; and of what was yet dearer to him, the life of his master.

No sooner was Cornet Davy gone than Sir John Copplestone, who had risen on his quitting the apartment, paced up and down it with slow and measured steps. His arms were crossed before him, his head inclined downward, his eye fixed on vacancy, whilst he held converse with his own dark thoughts ; and at intervals, so wrapt was he in these musings, a few broken sentences escaped his lips. “ It is even so — I think it cannot fail. Hand and seal is given upon it — wherefore then fear ? wherefore doubt ? It must be so — the plan is obvious, well laid ; the men trusted and sure men — why should it fail ? it is a foolish fear. The practised gamester hesitates not to stake his all on a high cast, when he knows his adversary sees not the loaded

dice — and those who have so long practised on others must now take their risk. Our play is sure and good : no shuffle-board was ever freer castings or rubs than the way we have smoothed for fortune — it is but to pass over the first line, and the go is the game. It is, it must be so. Yet were it not well to see how the fates look upon me ? hitherto they have been propitious ; I may yet learn something. That fiend in woman's form has power and knowledge in her dark mystery that would make a very saint consult her, though 't were against his conscience. I must be cautious how I deal with her : money she shall have ; yet sparingly, not enough to make her cease to serve me : she must be led on in the hope to gain more. Yes, it shall be so : she waits me, I will see her ; once more I will see, and know how this great cast will turn — be it for good or evil."

Sir John Copplestone immediately summoned a serving man into his presence, and bade him "send in the good woman," as he was pleased to call his creature, "who had skill in medicinal

herbs and simples for healing the sick, since he (Sir John) would have some discourse with her on such matters."

The servant went to do his office, not at all surprised by the command he had received, since he well knew his master held the person in question in considerable estimation on account of her supposed medicinal skill. At the time of our tale many a witch and many a trafficker in the stars cloaked her more dangerous as well as more lucrative employment under such a disguise, which served the double purpose of screening the credulity of her employers and her own imposture from detection.

CHAP. II.

The worm of conscience still be-gnaw thy soul !
Thy friends suspect for traitors while thou liv'st,
And take deep traitors for thy dearest friends !
No sleep close up that deadly eye of thine,
Unless it be while some tormenting dream
Affrights thee with a hell of ugly devils !
Thou elvish-mark'd, abortive, rooting hog.

SHAKSPEARE.

COPPLESTONE'S command was followed by the appearance of Dame Gee: she walked boldly into the room, but greeted her ancient patron with respect as she asked his pleasure. The door was secured before he vouchsafed an answer. Habit had rendered this caution so familiar to him (since most of Sir John's conferences were of a nature to require secrecy), that it was a rare matter for Copplestone to give audience to any person with an open door.

‘ I would require further help from your art, mother,’ said Sir John; ‘ though, by late chances, my faith in your predictions is much

shaken. *He* is returned to England notwithstanding I sent him abroad at the time you named as being most suited to my hopes in the affair of his absence. Yet he is come back again: again is he risen up, like an adder that seemed crushed under foot, once more to lie in my path, watching but to sting me. You dealt darkly and falsely in that matter."

"I did not," said Dame Gee, in a manner that spoke no fear; "I could give you proof I did not. Did I not tell you that you had best look to yourself, and leave the boy to his own fortunes? I gave you no assurance that he would not return: I only told you that if you *did* send him to a far country, the time I named was the best for your purpose, and so it was; for I know you wished that he should never more return."

"Ha!" exclaimed Copplestone, "dare you say this, and to my face? it is false, foully false. I told you the lad was grown insolent as he grew nearer to manhood and independence. I had treated him as a father, offered him my own daughter, who was fit to share an earl's estate, so young and fair is she; and he, the in-

grate, the viper, he put scorn on my great offer, dishonoured her by refusal, and held cheap my proffered bounty. This were cause enough, had I no other, to make me wish him removed from my sight : I sent him to do himself service, where his father left him lands, in Barbadoes ; I had redeemed those lands from the hard hands of rapacious creditors ; I did him no wrong in sending him where fortune grows by industry, with the master's eye to watch for its increase."

" You sent him, Sir John," said Dame Gee, " but you sent him not alone ; there was one bore him company more as his keeper than as his servant. But for one chance, and that you know well, he would have detained him there till the pestilent fever or the raging heats of that fiery climate did their work on a sickly boy. Have I not spoken truth ?"

Copplestone changed colour at hearing this ; but resolved that the woman whom he feared as well as trusted, in her presumed commerce with fortune and the stars, should not see how much he was moved by her words, he checked all outward signs of feeling their import, and

said, with gloomy pride of aspect and manner, "How know you aught of that man? he died soon after he was saved from a watery grave, and, as I have learnt, spoke to no one before death, excepting to the boy he had followed on service, and with whom he suffered shipwreck. You would practise on me? I see you would," continued Copplestone, fiercely, "but beware, beware, woman, palter not with me."

"I speak truth," said Dame Gee, "though, may be, I speak it darkly."

"Beware," exclaimed Copplestone; "for even heathens knew how to deal with juggling magicians, and gave them death in requital for false dealing with their masters. Trust not my patience too far; and know that though men like myself, who hold their courses in deep waters, would fathom their depths for safety ere they venture too far upon them, yet though they respect the art which helps them to steer far from rocks and shoals, they hold in little reverence those who practise it. So do I hold thy art and thee: I buy its uses as I would a weapon—a needful thing, yet one not to be

turned against myself. Remember, therefore, who thou art; for this day thou hast forgotten thyself strangely, and has spoken most foully and falsely to me."

I have done neither," said Dame Gee: "if you bid me search into your fortunes, you must take them as I find them, evil or good; they are not of my choosing. I have told you many things by arts that you know are forbidden — arts dangerous to me, and nothing safe to yon. By them I have learnt much that is darkly written in your horoscope; and as a proof that I have learnt these things by no juggle, by means no human power could suggest, mark what I now tell thee, and tremble. Thy destiny is strangely connected with the contents of yonder cabinet."

As she spoke Dame Gee pointed with her finger to the red velvet cabinet which stood in the apartment. Copplestone, in spite of all his self-control, started like the deer when suddenly roused from his covert: terror possessed his soul, shook every nerve in his stubborn frame, as the ashy whiteness of death

passed over his countenance, in whose expression there was a livid witness of guilt allied to fear.

“Thou hast not learnt it?” he said in a low, perturbed voice, as he seemed to draw his breath with difficulty to utter even these few words. “Dost thou know more?”

“Nothing more,” replied Dame Gee, calmly. “I have told all I know. The stars speak not like us mortals in plain and direct terms: they do but parcel out the shadows of things to come; and danger and safety may be learnt but in part by the aspect of their influences. Thus when the house of life is found opposed by——”

“Cease thy terms of art,” said Copplestone: “they are as little understood by me as would be the language of Chaldea, in which this fell science was first taught by man. I know it is great and fearful. Give me its saving power; teach me to walk by it so as to guide my steps to fortune, and I will do for thee hereafter some true benefit. Daniel, the wise prophet of old, was rewarded for the interpretations he made as he stood before the king. He was clothed in scarlet, and wore a chain of gold about his neck,

and he was mighty in his place and in his works. The revealer of hidden things must never want reward ; nor shalt thou : yet the youth returned alive ! ”

“ He did,” said Dame Gee, “ and I would counsel you to leave him to his fortunes. Deal not with him ; for he is under a higher hand than thine. He came hither through the tumult and strife of many waters. Storms and winds came from their secret regions to make the goodly bark that floated him their prey ; and every mountain wave foamed in anger as it chased its victim. The deep sea opened wide a yawning gulf, and it was to that tempest-driven bark a grave : the ocean closed upon it, the wild winds howled its dirge, scarcely a living thing was left to tell the tale, yet even then *he* escaped — he still lives ; some power, stronger than stormy winds or beating tempests, stronger than thy malice, guarded him. Forbear, then ; I give thee warning ; forbear to harm him ; or the fate thou wouldst measure out for him may be thine own.”

Copplestone looked surprised, as with an

elevation of voice and language, well practised by the sorceress in her dealings with those she would awe or direct, she assumed an air and manner of more dignity than on a casual glance could have been expected from one of her person and degree. But Dame Gee was a consummate actress; and if deceit could have passed undetected with the master whom she served, her part at times was so admirably played, that she might have cheated the father of lies himself with her hypocrisy. Yet in justice to her we must say that she really felt an interest for Radcliffe. It is true that she had not cared to spare him in a matter where she hoped to gain something by giving Reginald Elford intelligence of the interview she had witnessed between Amias and Agnes; yet she had known Radcliffe from a boy, and really liked him much better than her patron and dupe, Sir John Copplestone; for though Sir John employed her, he did it in a sullen and offensive manner, and doled out his rewards with a cunning and a sparing hand, ever keeping her in small pay, in order to keep her humble

and entirely dependent on himself. Dame Gee saw in what manner she was treated, and artfully requited it, so that she at once feared, hated, and beguiled Copplestone, to a degree that, with all his cunning, he had neither suspected nor deemed to be within the compass of probability. Yet Sir John was struck with the energetic manner in which she now warned him to beware how he dealt with Radcliffe; and could not forbear a remark, prompted by his own suspicious temper, that she must have some extraordinary cause to feel any kindness for this youth.

“I have none,” replied Dame Gee, who was careful not to let Copplestone know she cared more for his godson than for himself. “The youth has never offended me,” she added; “and of late years I have seen little of him. What I tell you is for your own sake, Sir John, more than for his, when you ask me counsel how you ought to deal with him.”

“Let it pass,” said Copplestone. “There is another point on which I would question you. Have you seen Coleman? Has he done my

bidding respecting the loyalist gentlemen he was about to inform against, for keeping close certain properties uncompounded for with the committee of sequestration? Did my orders arrive in time to save them? Not a royalist must now be touched in such matters."

"He has forborne them," said Dame Gee; "your orders arrived in season, for the Captain had the toils ready, and laid to snare them."

"It is well," said Copplestone; "I am glad they were spared."

"You are grown strangely kind to royalists and cavaliers, Sir John," said Dame Gee.

"It matters not to you, woman," replied Copplestone: "Coleman had learnt this affair respecting the concealed property by some blundering account from your son—not the idiot son—his brother it is I mean; else you were not the person to be employed in such matters. But I now tell you to hold back the lad; let him tell no tales against royalists, for they will not be encouraged at this time, whatever might formerly have happened. Another word, and I have done with you. Look that

you bring me intelligence how it may fare with an enterprise I have much at heart, that I hope to accomplish on the twentieth day of June. I would know if it is likely to prosper. Spare no labour ; search the hidden book of fate, and tell me if that page be written in characters of darkness or of light ! Here is a gold piece for thee. Be secret, silent, and you shall want no reward."

"I look to receive some part of it now," said Dame Gee, pocketing the gold piece.

"Have I not bestowed it ?" exclaimed Copplestone. "Your guerdon is pure gold ; and would you still cry, Give ?"

"I look for a better reward," said Dame Gee ; "a service that you have the power to do me, if you will."

"Speak it," said Copplestone, abruptly, "and begone."

"My poor boy, who you but now called an *idiot*—a curse on the hour that deprived him of his wits—my poor boy took some foolish part, for lack of knowing better, against the troopers at Tamerton revel ; and they have carried him away to prison for it. You are a

justice of the peace, Sir John, and have power with them. You can obtain his liberty, if you will but interfere: Captain Butler swears that my poor lad struck down one of his men, and that he had sense enough to know what he did was unlawful. Butler threatens, should the man die of his hurt, which he is like to do, that the boy shall be hanged for his offence."

Copplestone listened attentively. "Had it been a small matter," said he, "I would have done something; but Butler is high in command, much trusted, much in power; and—and I have reasons—I am compelled—in short, I must not thwart *him* now, whatever be his purpose. Be satisfied with this assurance, if I could have helped you I would have done it."

"I am not satisfied," said Dame Gee; "be the lad wise or foolish, he is my own flesh and blood, and I know you can save him, if you list to do it. Many a worse boy have you set out of prison, to please those you would win over to your mind. Butler was long your friend, and you can do it and defy him."

"I tell you that I cannot do it, woman," said

Copplestone. "There are reasons, potent reasons, that make it most necessary I should not stir up ill blood in Butler, by opposing him at such a time as this is. I tell you I *dare not* do it—that is a strong word when I speak it. I dare not, no, not if your idiot boy were my own flesh and blood."

"He will die, then; die in a prison or on the gallows," said the suppliant; "he will die as surely as the sun is in the heavens."

"Let him die, then," said Copplestone, sternly; "trouble me no more about a miserable idiot lad, who is of no worth to me, nor to thee either. Go and do my bidding; I have other things to look to than that of opening cages for gaol birds in these times. Begone!"

Dame Gee obeyed, for she well knew the inflexible character of her patron; and that as he possessed the secret of her dealing in witchcraft, he held her in absolute command; since there were more Hopkins's than one abroad, into whose hands he could betray her if he chose so to do. As she passed down the long avenue of trees that led to Warleigh House,

she suddenly stopped and turned towards it with a bitter and malignant expression in her countenance.

“ Idiot son !” she cried ; “ gaol bird ! thou hast other things to do than to open cages for such as he is !—I know thou hast, thou deep, plotting, cunning villain. But I will find a way to requite thee for this hard-hearted refusal to save my son’s life. It is my son, my favourite son ; once a fair-haired boy, full of sense and spirit ; though now a simple idiot. Thou hast called on me for counsel ! bid me read the book of fate to thee. I will unfold a terrible page, and take thee even in thy own snare. Thou shalt feel what it is to awaken a mother’s vengeance, and I that mother : even now will I curse thee, before I leave thy own land, thy ill-gotten land.”

Saying this, Dame Gee, who, after having for many years cheated others, sometimes imposed upon herself, prepared to perform one of those rites of her unhallowed arts which she deemed most deadly against an enemy. The rite was of barbarous origin, and its existence is even now to be traced in the more remote

parts of Cornwall and Devon. She had a small ashen wand in her hand, which she now broke, and turning "sun-ways" as it was called, that is, following the course of that luminary, she walked thrice round in the figure of a small circle, as many times breaking her wand and cursing Sir John Copplestone as she did so.

As she threw the last piece of the broken wand upon the ground, she said, "It has charmed many an adder and many a wily snake*; but no snake more wily in his dark and winding way, no adder more poisonous in its forked tongue, than thou art in thy dark course, and in thy false, deceitful lips. But thou shalt become as worthless and as wasted as these broken fragments, that I trample under foot; and like them shalt thou lie withering in the dust. I have cursed thee, and now will I seek one whom thou dreamest not of. I will fathom thy deep purpose, though it were hidden

* The peasantry of Dartmoor charm snakes, and render adders harmless, by making a circle about them with the bough of an ash tree. They also hang "ashen boughs" round the necks of their cattle to preserve them from being bitten by these reptiles.

as the depths of the sea—I will fathom it to work out my revenge; for long hast thou been to me a tyrant, and now thou wilt become a murderer to my son.”

So saying, she wrapped her cloak about her, and set off to execute a plan which will hereafter be made known to the reader. We must now say a few words respecting Copplestone’s extraordinary connection with Dame Gee.

We have before noticed that Sir John had been extremely unsettled in his religious opinions; and, notwithstanding he was very strongly suspected of leaning towards the Ranters, he still persisted in calling himself an Independent. If he were such or not, we know not, though we are much inclined to think that to the better part of any religion, professed by any sect, he was wholly a stranger. One thing, however, is certain, (and where there was so much to blame we would not lose one grain of his virtues, seeing how few they were in number,) he was so far an Independent as to condemn all those vexatious and cruel accusations brought against the witches and sorceresses of his day. The

Calvinists had been the chief instigators of these abominable persecutions; and the practices of Matthew Hopkins, the famous witch-finder for the parliament, have become so well known from the lines alluding to them in *Hudibras*, that few of our readers will want to be reminded of the numbers of poor old men and women who suffered for their supposed dealings with the genius of evil, by order of that very parliament whose counsels were chiefly under his own immediate direction and care.

Copplestone, we repeat, took part with the witches, and never would he, as a magistrate, issue a warrant for the apprehension of any one of them, notwithstanding the godly patrons of Matthew Hopkins had sent into Devon an agent almost as active as himself to “find revolted witches out.” Now, lest our readers should fall into the error of supposing this indulgence to the persecuted votaries of the devil arose, on the part of Sir John Copplestone, from any weakness like that of mercy, we must tell them it was no such thing.

Sir John, like many of the dark and danger-

ous characters of his time (and some amongst the most noted have not escaped the charge), trafficked with these creatures of fraud and evil, and had a most unlimited faith in those great juggles of the age—judicial astrology and the grand arcanum. It was long before such follies were exploded: in the days of the civil wars they were nearly as potent as in those of Elizabeth and James the First. Insensible to any one principle of true religion, practising only its external forms, and believing its most perverted doctrines, Copplestone was, nevertheless, a slave to superstition, a very child in credulity. Nor were those found wanting to take advantage of the weak points in his character, and by fostering his follies, or flattering his hopes, to turn both to the account of knavery and imposture.

The artful Dame Gee, whose shrewdness enabled her to deal with such a man, was amongst those who had most cunningly and most effectually trafficked with Sir John Copplestone in these dark and nefarious acts of folly and superstition,—a circumstance that will sufficiently account for his calling in her aid at a moment

when he hoped to forward a deep laid plan upon which he rested the future schemes of his ambition.

In accordance with that plan, Copplestone feared, at the present moment, to incense Captain Butler, else it is not unlikely he would have complied with Dame Gee's earnest solicitations to interfere for the preservation of her unfortunate son. However much he might fear a quarrel with Butler at this time, he had done, perhaps, a more imprudent thing in offending Dame Gee; since by such an act he had roused all the slumbering spirit of ill-will she had long entertained towards him, — and the fire of her revenge, when once thoroughly kindled, was certain to burst forth in a fearful and destructive flame.

CHAP. III.

—— This outward sainted deputy —
Whose settled visage and deliberate word
Nips youth i' the head, and follies doth emmew,
As falcon doth the fowl — is yet a devil.

SHAKSPEARE.

It was towards the evening of that day on which Dame Gee had held her interview with Sir John Copplesstone that he sallied forth alone to visit the hut of Black Will. Sir John mused as he paced slowly forward; the deep shadows of the long avenue of old trees under which he passed being no bad emblem of the state of his own mind—there all was darkness, indeed. He was miserable in himself, for he had not a quiet moment: his fears were those of guilt; they rose in succession to torment him, the last being ever the worst, like the plagues sent out to chasten the Egyptians.

The very fears of the wicked are a proof of God's divine providence in the moral govern-

ment of the world, and that nowhere does he leave himself without a witness—hope and fear being as ministering angels, the one of peace to the good conscience, the other of terror to the guilty breast. Even where there is no actual guilt, unless the providence of God is constantly borne in mind, from the cradle to the tomb, such is the nature of man, he is prone to disquiet himself in vain; and folly often grows into error, and finally into sin of the greatest magnitude.

Even so had it been with Sir John Copplestone: he had in his youth run a career of extravagance and folly; in maturer age, having changed his object but not his heart, from a foolish he was grown into a wicked man. He was of a nature that never spared an enemy or forgave an injury, however remote might be its date. He had acquired great wealth; and was far advanced, by crooked and devious paths, on the road which leads to the very summit of fortune. As he trod the ascent, so did the view become more and more expanded to the eye of his ambition. It ranged over a vast territory

that he longed to call his own, no matter if the price to win it became, Judas like, the wages of blood. Such was the worse than human darkness that hung over the mind of Copplestone; and still, as did the infidel king, he hardened his heart, and followed his wicked course.

The hut of his dependent and creature, Black Will, (a man employed, like the wolf dog, solely on account of his fierceness,) stood within Sir John's own domain. It was a low, thatched tenement, having a solitary and gloomy character, not ill suited to that of its possessor. On all sides was it surrounded with dark and massive forest trees, through which the sun scarcely sent an enlivening beam at noonday. The hut was old and ivy-grown: the windows so narrow as to resemble slits in the wall; and the door, unlike those of most cottages, was strong, cased with iron nails, and seldom open — it was as hard and as close as its master's soul.

Sir John advanced; but stopped ere he struck on this ill-omened portal. He paused as if for a moment to listen should aught be stirring within. No sounds met his ear, and one loud

knock of his walking staff announced his desire of admission.

Our English moralist has said, "that to dread no eye and to suspect no tongue is the great prerogative of innocence." It could not, therefore, be that of Sir John Copplestone ; for though a daring as well as a determined man, and never yielding to an inferior, yet he never could meet Black Will without those involuntary feelings of undefined suspicion that are always allied to fear. Will was a low, base fellow, of no more importance in the scale of society than a beggar who asks an alms by the way-side. But Will possessed a knowledge of certain secrets, gained by having been made the tool of wickedness, that gave him consequence even in the eyes of Sir John Copplestone ; so much are the vile invested with importance if they possess the means of becoming the betrayers of those by whom they are employed.

Sir John and his dependent were, for a moment, both silent ; as Will, who probably guessed a visit from his master was not likely to be one that either would think safe, if liable

to sudden interruption, secured the door with bolt and bar, and then, with an air of gloomy civility, asked him if his honour would please to be seated after his evening walk.

Sir John was not a man to waste words where business was in question. He made no reply; but, looking Black Will earnestly in the face, drew, from beneath his cloak, a bundle of papers, and said, "Hast thou learnt, as I commanded, if Colonel Holborn is yet returned to Plymouth after the leaguer of Sydenham house?"

"He is, Sir John," replied Will.

"Good," said Copplestone. "Here is a packet for him, which thou must this night place in his own hand ere thou shalt know rest or sleep. Remember, into no hand, save his own, must this be given. Colonel Holborn will, on the receipt of this, deliver to thee certain warrants which thou must as hastily bear back again to me. Be faithful but in this, and thou art made, Will, made for ever. All I have hitherto done for thee shall be as nothing; whilst *one* man secured, thou wilt have nothing to fear for past offences. Dost thou understand me?"

“ I do,” said Black Will with a malicious smile.

“ Ay,” cried Copplestone, “ that insolent companion, that foul-mouthed railer, who spurned me to my very face, who rendered me suspected, even by the very men with whom I was in commission, why he, I say, he shall be given into my hand, as Saul was into that of David; but not as David requited Saul will I do by him: we will take from him something more than the skirts of a garment. His life is forfeit and it shall be paid. Thou didst miss him once: this time the work is sure; and that by the open process of a summary law.”

“ This is news, indeed,” cried Will, who had his own especial reasons for dreading the person so darkly alluded to by Copplestone; and he added with a ruffian look of satisfaction, “ I could risk the gallows with pleasure to have my turn with him.”

“ There is no risk,” said Copplestone, “ the plan is surely laid, and cannot fail us. I have done much, but not all yet; I have lived no coward life: every act of mine has had a high purpose

and as high a danger. Ambition is no crawler on the earth : its toils are upward, its hopes have a high wing, and place him who wins the prize far above the vulgar herd of common men ; they gaze and follow him with weak and wondering eyes, as they would look upon an eagle's flight in the clouds." — Sir John Copplestone spoke this as if giving vent to his own feelings and daring thoughts, without having any particular purpose of addressing them to Black Will ; but he turned a fixed glance upon him as he thus continued, —

“ Mark me—to-night, when all is hushed and still, when every cottage has closed its door, and its inmates sleep, so that no eye may watch thy steps to rouse suspicion, then do my errand. The moon will give light to thy path, and it shall lead thee to obtain a rich reward ; so thou art but faithful.”

Black Will, who for many years had been the tool, as well as in a great measure the confident, of Sir John Copplestone, and had often attended to his instructions, accompanied as they were in general by his fanatical ravings,

now listened in gloomy satisfaction, as his master unfolded to him the deeply laid plan that was to be accomplished with so much mystery and zeal, — a plan that should complete his own schemes of profit and advantage, and enable him to repay all his agents and instruments in the undertaking, even beyond their utmost hope. He now placed in the hands of Black Will the packet for Colonel Holborn ; and as Will prepared to arm himself for his night journey to Plymouth, Sir John gave him the most minute instructions, together with the pass-word, in order that he might obtain instant admission into the presence of the commanding officer of the guard.

Copplestone now rose to return home ; and ere he did so, gave a parting caution to his messenger in these words : — “ See that thou dost my errand, but never prate about it. If any man questions thee, let thy answer be civil, but let it be one to show thou hast no more knowledge of my affairs than the wax which keeps them close sealed within these papers. If drink be offered thee, shun it as thou wouldst

a betrayer ; for wine that promiseth joy hath its end in sadness ; and will often, like the vices of Nebuchadnezzar, lead to such sin and folly as shall send forth the tippler naked, poor, and beggared, to feed with the very beasts for penance in the field. Forbear it, I say, and be faithful ; for, as Solomon saith, such are the wise."

With these instructions Sir John concluded his visit ; and leaving Black Will to set out on his journey, he retraced his steps to Warleigh, pondering as he went on the probabilities of failure or success that attended the great and daring scheme on which he now rested the ultimate hopes of his avarice and his ambition.

CHAP. IV.

Great piety consists in pride ;
To rule is to be sanctified ;
To domineer, and to controul,
Both o'er the body and the soul,
Is the most perfect discipline,
Of church rule, and by right divine.

BUTLER'S *Hudibras*.

THOSE who now live in times when, it is to be hoped, the government of this country will not again be so rudely shaken by civil discord, can scarcely form any adequate idea, on a general view, of the individual state of warfare, party spirit, and constant agitation that had crept into the bosom of even the most retired domestic circles during the great rebellion. It is only by an attentive examination into the more minute parts of history and biography that scenes like these become disclosed ; and without some knowledge of the spirit of such fearful times a mere relation of events, such as we have to set before the

reader, would seem not only improbable but unnatural.

By an attentive examination, however, into these particulars, we shall find that unity of purpose, of feeling, and of opinion, was then rarely found. In public, even amongst the most brave and noble, jealousy, indecision, or mistrust, divided and vexed their councils. We find the baneful effects of these evils followed close on the steps of victory, and threatened to rob her of her crown. This, indeed, was more especially obvious in those unhappy jealousies that existed between Prince Rupert, Prince Maurice, and the Marquis of Hertford, immediately after the capture of Bristol. The want of prudence in the first-named prince, evinced by his adventuring a battle, under the circumstances he did so, at Marston Moor, where Cromwell and Fairfax gained so signal a victory, having been solely prompted by those heart-burnings of jealousy in council which too often tarnished the lustre of a character, otherwise so glorious in every virtue that adorns the warrior and the prince.

But these divisions in opinion were not alone confined to public men: towns, villages, families, and nearest friends, were at variance, even in their very loyalty, and how much more so in their religion, or where a spirit of national discontent fostered that of growing private discord! Unity was, in fact, scarcely any where to be found, except in the mere mob, and their union was nothing more than an agreement in all that was wrong, having no end but tumult and aggression,—a desire to pull down, without a knowledge how to build up, the general character of all mob rebellions; where whatever keeps them in check becomes oppression in their eyes, and their leaders drive them on, as hunters do hounds, to run down the game for the spoil and the tables of their masters.

During the civil wars, fathers and sons, and even husbands and wives, (for women then, in politics and religion, became as violent as the men,) were at variance to such a degree that it seemed literally true every house was divided within itself. The domestic circle, and even the cheerful fireside of home, was rendered

gloomy and unhappy, a scene of fierceness and of strife, by perpetual arguments and quarrels on such points as the privileges vested in the prerogative of the crown, the rights of the people, of parliaments, the army, and how far resistance might go before it became rebellion, &c. &c.

What, however, was far worse, and roused yet a fiercer spirit of domestic hatred and contest, was the perpetual disagreements on the more abstract and mystical parts of religion. The nearest in blood and in obligation, "affections dear and all the charities," wrangled, quarrelled, and contended so hotly over these abstruse points of Christianity, that they forgot they were Christians, and had no charity left for one another, substituting, in place of that meekness and brotherly love (so enjoined in Scripture), hatred and strife (equally condemned by it); and not content that God had made plain every principle connected with the duties and faith of man, to guide him to salvation, they would not rest till they had gained admission into the hidden counsels of the Most

High; their own presumption leading them to think that those things which were above the capacity of man, and, therefore, wisely held aloof from it, *they* could unfold and lay open as readily as they did their own folly and conceit in the attempt: so that whilst many of these wild enthusiasts wholly overlooked plain and positive commands, such as of order, peace, and obedience, they puzzled their heads, day and night, and heated their brains and passions over such points as the nature of free-will, election, a state of grace, predestination, pædobaptism, &c. &c.; and all those endless toils and difficulties of theology, which none but the most profoundly learned divine should dare venture to touch upon, and even then with reverence and modesty. And thus did these enthusiasts often rush madly into all the horrors of bloodshed and rebellion, from an abuse of those very doctrines which, when rightly understood, by the humble-minded and sober Christian, are found to proclaim the most entire peace and good will on earth towards all mankind.

From this state of domestic misery arose a petty

and private warfare, so that fathers often watched their sons, and sons their fathers, to spy into their actions, and, if possible, to read their very thoughts. Instances have come down to us, authenticated by strong evidence, where the very ties of nature became broken; and sons betrayed their own parents in the brutal ferocity of fanaticism and party zeal. Some virtuous instances have, also, been recorded of parents and children, who watched over the conduct of each other with the purest intentions, to save them from what these well-meaning persons most truly deemed to be a great and crying sin — that of rising against the King, and dipping their hands in the blood of their fellow-countrymen, by secretly abetting or personally taking part with the rebellion: in some cases such a right-governed spirit interfered to prevent the foulest acts of treachery and malice.

We have been led to preface the present chapters with these observations, because they will assist in throwing light on some remarkable facts that we are about to record in the conduct of Gertrude Copplestone. Her sense of what

was due to God and man made her grieve as she witnessed the wicked spirit now abroad in all directions ; but when, from her own attentive observations, she was induced to think her father was playing a double part, that he was about to commit some act of treachery, which would ruin him in body and soul, with a piety deserving the highest commendation, a piety that called for the most strenuous exertions of her firm and resolute mind, she resolved, if possible, to save him from so much misery and guilt.

By managing with great prudence, Gertrude had contrived to obtain some valuable information from Dame Gee, — a woman whose arts and love of gain had, more than once, made her a tool of *both* parties ; sometimes betraying the one or the other as occasion offered for so doing with profit to herself. Gertrude knew the character of this woman and despised it ; but, alas ! what could she do ? from Dame Gee she gained intelligence she could obtain from no other quarter. She treated her, therefore, with civility, and though she never entirely

trusted her, yet she deemed her father's safety was concerned in not wholly discouraging her.

Dame Gee was, in fact, possessed of means of gaining information in a very remarkable manner. She had been an active agent in her day; and, under an assumed name, was the very woman (spoken of by Clarendon) who, at one period, had been employed in the capacity of a female spy during the siege of Reading by no less a person than Colonel Fielding himself. She had afterwards acted in the same dangerous office during the leaguer of Rougemont Castle. This occupation had led to her connection with the notorious Captain Coleman, who, less artful, less clever, but not less villanous than herself, had frequently been duped, by his more subtle female associate, in the dark trade of treachery and intrigue, — a trade generally productive of small gain to its minor agents, who, in the end, are often sacrificed to prevent suspicion from falling on their employers. This brief statement will sufficiently explain by what means many things became known to Dame Gee, of which, under other circumstances, she never

could have acquired the least or most distant knowledge.

Sir John Copplestone had injured her feelings in the very point where they were most susceptible of injury : she had vowed a bitter revenge ; nor was she long in seeking the surest means to effect it, though she did so in a manner to secure herself from any mischief that might be the result of her discoveries. Her plan was in agitation, and as one step towards its completion she sought (not long after her last interview with Sir John) his daughter, the gentle Gertrude.

Dame Gee found her alone ; and glancing her eye on the expressive countenance of the young lady, she saw, in a moment, that melancholy and unhappy thoughts were the companions of her musings. With an affected air of extreme civility she saluted Gertrude, and made one of those speeches she was wont to use when she wished to impress on the mind of her hearer that she had something to communicate of import, which had become known to her by more than mortal means.

Gertrude had too much good sense to give way to the follies of her time; and her own heart never plotting evil, she had no wish, no anxieties, like her father, to unfold that book of fate which is wisely hidden from human sight. Gertrude, however, (though she discouraged Dame Gee's pretensions to supernatural powers) did not doubt but that she had something really of import to communicate; and begged her, therefore, in a mild and persuasive tone, to say what it might be.

“Your father, young lady,” replied Dame Gee, “is busy of late, and seems as if he feared things were not likely to be so quiet as most people would desire they might be, after a long and cruel war. Did you hear of the store of arms that was brought in last night by Black Will and some of his fellows, after all the house was gone to rest? Your father was up though; and the arms are secured within the strong vault under the great north chamber.”

Gertrude started, and turned pale. She had heard nothing; but remembered well, ere she retired to rest, seeing her father busied in ex-

amining the keys of certain vaults and chambers of the old house, that he always held under his own especial care. She recollected, also, that Black Will was closeted with him for more than an hour; and Coleman, at the same time, had been in the house.

“Ay,” continued Dame Gee, who watched the anxious change so evident in Gertrude’s countenance, “you may disbelieve, if you will, that I can read the stars aright. But one thing do not disbelieve, that I know much of what is now in progress to work out evil; and oh,” she continued, with emphasis, “as you love the man of your heart, credit what I *now* tell you—if he comes here on the evening of the twentieth of June he is a lost man, as sure as the sun is in the heavens; for the twentieth of June is fated to be an evil day in Warleigh House, unless——”

“What mean you, woman?” said Gertrude: “tell me, in plain terms, what danger is to be feared? and how I can avert it? To whom did you allude when you but now spoke so strangely, when——”

“When I spoke of the man of your heart?” said Dame Gee: “nay, never blush, young lady, since many besides myself know that Gertrude Copplestone, the rich heiress of Warleigh, would have given herself, heart and hand, to Sir William Bastard, had not her father and that gallant cavalier been at deadly feud about an old quarrel. They are friends now, but only such for their own interests; yet one of them will prove a betrayer.”

“Speak,” said Gertrude; “I beseech you so speak, that I may understand your meaning. This is no time for dark hints. If there is danger, let me know it in plain words; and do not thus expose my father or the gentleman you have named, somewhat too boldly, to fall under suspicion from your dark and evil suggestions.”

“You are angry, lady,” said Dame Gee; “yet I have spoken nothing but truth, however it may seem mysterious or obscure. Mark me, for I dare not linger, your father was in the hall when I stole in to you, and he seemed as if about to come this way. Mark me—there is a deep and wicked scheme afoot to entrap Sir

Piers Edgcumbe, Sir William Bastard, your unhappy uncle, and many other noble gentlemen, whom I dare not name. I warn you of their danger. You will not, I know, betray me in return for the service I now do you in making known these things. And you dare not," she continued, in a bolder tone; "for your father is in my power; ay, Sir John Copplestone is in my power; yet, for *your* sake, if I am well used, I would not employ it for his destruction."

Gertrude was about to speak, but Dame Gee would not suffer her, and in a hurried manner she thus concluded her strange and alarming address:—"I know you love Sir William Bastard—if by the timely warning I now give you he is saved, I shall call on you to reward the good deed, by an act of service that I think you may do for me after this twentieth day of June. Believe me, I speak truth. Examine yourself, and see if there is not cause for suspicion. Tell your father that you have discovered he is preparing his house for a state of defence. Question him closely; and if he does not himself confirm the truth of all I

have spoken, never trust me more. The twentieth of June — remember ; on *that* day I will be here ; I will learn more, and in the mean time do you find out some way to warn your friends of their danger. If you fail, they are lost.”

So saying, Dame Gee hastily retreated, leaving Gertrude in a state of mind the most distressed, yet resolved so to act that nothing on her part should be wanting to satisfy herself if what had been spoken might be false or true.

CHAP. V.

The best way is, to slander Valentine
With falsehood, cowardice, and poor descent
Three things that women highly hold in hate.

SHAKSPEARE.

THERE was an anxious, a disturbed, an angry expression about her father's countenance and manner when he met Gertrude, that he could not conceal from her observation. He looked as he felt—miserable. He was in fact a man encompassed by his own wickedness; it was to him as a charmed circle from which there was no escaping. His proud and stubborn spirit, prone to devise crimes and resolute to act them, had determined on the commission of a great deed of evil: yet the fear of mischance, the apprehension of some untoward circumstance that might arise to thwart his measures, and the goadings of conscience, which, in spite of all his hardness of heart, would, sometimes, sting him to the quick, kept his mind in that

state of agitation which allowed him not a moment's peace.

This affected his temper, so that he had become irascible, impatient, and ready to quarrel or chafe about a straw with every one who approached him; glad, perhaps, to find some external object on which to vent the bitterness of those feelings that preyed upon himself. The meeting with his daughter in these moments was to her of unspeakable misery. She looked at him and shuddered; whilst her own heart whispered to her the fear that all she had heard *was* true. Her father was about to act the part of a betrayer. He had, apparently, no intention to communicate to her his plans, whatever they might be; for on Gertrude's questioning him about putting his house into a state of defence, he desired her, in a peremptory manner, to be silent.

"I cannot, sir," she said, — "I cannot be silent, when I fear there is some plan in agitation that may affect your safety. I am your daughter, and I hope not a disobedient one. Oh, my father, do not thus frown upon me. Trust your

child with your purposes ; trust her who would watch over your safety, had she the power to do so, as a guardian spirit. What have I done that you should thus chide me at the very moment when my feelings are to you those of duty and obedience ?”

“ Duty and obedience !” exclaimed Copplestone in a scornful tone ; “ yes, such obedience as you showed to me when you encouraged the suit of Sir William Bastard, before I discovered his deep designs, and frustrated them.”

“ I had no intention to wed Sir William Bastard without your consent, sir,” replied Gertrude ; “ and that I thought would not be denied to a gentleman of his birth and character.”

“ His birth and character !” cried Copplestone ; “ tell me not of such pretensions. I knew him years before you chose to fancy his vices into virtues, his dross into gold. I tell you, Gertrude, he was once a hair-brained prodigal : he spent his hours in idle mirth and foolery ; kept open house, and hawks and haggards ; made midnight riots, and caroused deep healths with every idle reveller ; turned

his acres into wine-pots, and made his estates run with his horses on the gambling course; whilst his huntsmen and wild companions kept up an everlasting halloo to his follies, driving them on as madly as they did his hounds, till he, like the prodigal son, left his very father's house to feed with swine. His fortune broken, his plate melted by the fire of his own passions; and mortgages gained strength as his rent-roll fell into a consumption. He became at last a shameless borrower, one who would stand cap in hand for a jacobus or a silver crown to any thoughtless fellow who would lend it."

Gertude felt exceedingly hurt at this bitter and exaggerated picture drawn by her father of some youthful errors on the part of Sir William Bastard, that had long since been atoned for by the most praiseworthy steadiness of conduct. She felt, at this moment, that in honour and in truth she could not but defend him from so gross an attack. "You wrong him, sir," she said; "you speak in severe terms of his youthful follies, and colour them too highly. You should remember that though

you have often told me he sought your assistance in a time of need, yet, nevertheless, the instant he came into possession of the estates bequeathed to him by his uncle, he paid all his early debts, cast off his youthful follies, and appeared as a true gentleman, noble in act, courteous in speech. He has since injured his fortune, it is true; but it was in the King's service, and, therefore, it is a merit. His debt to you, however, was requited, and that to the last penny."

"Requited!" said Coppelstone; "how did he requite me? I will tell you: when he was beggared in his fortunes, solely by his own follies and his unthrifty carriage, he sought me, to borrow money. I lent it on security being given; for I value not a doit a spendthrift's word — land and parchments must stand sponsors to it ere I part with a single coin."

"It is many years, sir," said Gertrude, "since Sir William Bastard needed or asked the assistance of any one."

"He was humble then," continued Coppelstone, "spoke small, and had a civil, asking

eye, that settled on the ground as he begged of me the loan of some poor matter of a thousand pounds. But when my gentleman was a man again, had a great estate fall to him, (like manna from heaven, for it seemed no less a miracle,) then he paid me. But how paid me? With haughty pride, with insolence, because, forsooth, I refused my daughter to his asking; and he demanded of me an acquittance of his debt in a bold, high tone, as if he were a lord. But this was nothing; I was appointed to the commission to look after the sequestered estates of malignants and delinquent persons. How did he then treat me? I will tell you. He maligned me, abused my honour, injured my character, and charged me with the private robbery of public goods. I have sworn to requite my injuries, and he shall feel I have."

Shocked at these threatenings of an unforgiving and revengeful spirit, Gertrude said in a manner the most emphatic, "Oh, my father, do not indulge a feeling of resentment. Surely you do not, you would not, purpose to betray Sir William Bastard to his enemies?"

Heaven knows they are many, in these fearful times."

"I will not be questioned, purpose what I may," said Copplestone.

"But I trust you purpose no evil," said Gertrude, in an anxious manner. "Gracious Heaven! what am I to think? I know you expect to hold in this house a solemn meeting of those you call your friends. Some of them, I confess, I have often felt surprised to hear you name as such. What must your purpose be, then, in that meeting, if you still indulge a spirit so full of bitterness towards one who is of their number?"

"Silence," exclaimed Copplestone; "Gertrude, I like not this spirit of curious questioning in you. Look that you do not quit the house: it is my command; a father's command. Stray not beyond these doors without my leave. I charge you on your obedience."

"I can have no temptation to disobey you, sir," she replied; "for did I do so, I know you have those about you who would be set on to follow me, as gaolers do the poor royalists,

when they are let out of their prisons for a few hours of seeming liberty. Yet if you have ever loved me, if I have ever deserved the name of a daughter in your sight, do not make me thus wretched by the dreadful doubts to which you have given birth. Tell me your purpose, and let me save you from the danger of your own fearful passions."

Copplestone looked sternly upon his daughter, and only said in reply, "Anger me no more by these enquiries. You have a woman's curiosity, that thinks a wonder lies hidden in every idle word, could you but shape it into sense. You have a busy spirit, Gertrude; your curiosity would unlock the secrets of a father's heart, expose all his most hidden thoughts to censure, and construe his lightest act by the measure of your own idle fancies. Away, away, keep your chamber, and trouble me no more."

It was in this angry mood Sir John Copplestone parted from his daughter. He had forbidden her leaving the house: she determined to obey him, well knowing how vain would be

resistance, even to his most unreasonable commands. Now more than ever did she feel convinced that he had some deep-laid scheme in the purposed meeting of the royalists. She resolved to trust Radcliffe, as far as her duty to her father would admit, with a knowledge of her fears; since she felt assured, however hostile he might have been to the King's cause, nevertheless he would be glad to become the means of preventing so great a crime as that of treachery. It was painful to speak on such a subject to Radcliffe, yet she thought it the safest and even the most delicate mode of procedure; well knowing that for her sake he would, as much as possible, spare her father any public censure, and act in the whole affair as if he did so on his own responsibility. He might save all parties from suffering by this premeditated misery and guilt.

She pondered on her plan; and ere she sought repose succeeded in obtaining an interview with young Radcliffe whilst her father was once more closetted with Black Will, in long and secret conference, in his own chamber.

CHAP. VI.

This, as I guess, should be th' appointed time ;
For o'er our heads have pass'd on homeward wing
Dark flights of rooks, and daws, and flocking birds,
Wheeling aloft with wild dissonant screams ;
Whilst from each hollow glen and river's bed
Rose the white curling mist, and softly stole
Up the dark wooded banks. JOANNA BAILLIE.

LEAVING Gertrude Copplestone and Amias Radcliffe, and all that concerns Warleigh, for the present, we must once more return to Mount Edgcumbe, where, on the evening of the nineteenth of June, in the old hall at the time of supper, were found seated several guests of Sir Piers. It was seven o'clock — an hour rather later than usual for the evening's meal. A long table, round which the guests had assembled, was covered with the most solid and plentiful fare.

Yet neither the good cheer nor the good wines that were circulated freely seemed to give

spirits to any one of the party. A portentous gloom sat on the countenance of each, and few and brief were the words spoken during the repast. No sooner were the servants withdrawn, and none remained present but Sir Piers and his devoted friends, than all spoke, and almost all in the same enquiring tone, since but one feeling, that of intense anxiety, seemed to possess every bosom.

“ Where tarries he? how is this? He is not come; there is no news, no intelligence: Burley promised that on this day we should have certain information, if his attempt had succeeded. To-morrow *he* will be here.”

“ If alive, he will be here,” said Sir Piers; “ but who can answer for the casualties of human life, and especially in such an attempt as he meditates? He may live or die in it: if he lives, it will be to such glory as any brave man would run a thousand chances and dangers to win; and if he dies, why I would not wish my own son, were he now in England, to be thus nobly employed, a fairer end. His grave will be pointed out in after-ages as a monument

of honourable though unfortunate daring ; yet, gentlemen, I am not so easily cast down as you seem to be by the non-arrival of a messenger : a man may do a great act, yet have neither leisure nor opportunity to send off a servant to proclaim it, even to his most impatient friends. Besides, it is not yet dark : there are many hours between this and midnight ; he may yet come."

" You are right, Sir Piers," said young Elford : " Captain Burley's messenger may be even now waiting but for the cover of night to steal upon us with more security ; and who knows if the honest boatman intrusted by you to ferry him over may not row round to the back of the Mount, or land him near the battery, as a spot least liable to observation. I will walk down to the shore, and be upon the look-out to give the signal : we despair too soon, and frighten ourselves with shadows."

" Do so, my young friend," said Sir Piers ; " I am no despondent. Hope hath not forsaken us, and never will, I trust, so long as there is one gentleman left in the county of Devon who

is ready to risk his life and fortune to join any enterprise in the attempt to succour our unhappy king. May God preserve him: many have been his misfortunes, but surely this is the bitterest of them all. Born to possess a kingdom, and with his generous and noble mind, to have all his actions, nay, his very virtues, slandered, and now to be a prisoner, and to lie counting clock after clock, as if time had nothing to do but to make the hours sorrowful and heavy with the royal captive's injuries! My heart bleeds when I think upon these things."

"Not so mine," said the gallant Trelawny of Trelawn, who was one of the party. "I would give bleeding hearts to the King's enemies, and keep my own whole and stout for his service. My breast pants with indignation when I think on those villains, who have kept their anointed sovereign, like a lion in a toil, penned up, ready for the cruel hunters: they do but now stand by and wait till they gather numbers sufficient, coward like, to despatch him with least danger to themselves."

“ Surely they would not be base enough to proceed to such an extremity,” said Sir Piers.

“ There is no more true courage in such men than there is stability in the power which builds itself on usurpation and injustice. What government was ever yet secure that began its career of righting supposed wrongs by the violation of charters, and of every old and sacred institution in the land? and what charter, what right, from that possessed by the crown down to the humblest burgher, but these fellows in power have clutched and rifled, as eagerly as a hawk does a poor heron that he gripes within his merciless claws? I’ll never believe but that the King must be rescued and restored, else is there no hope left on earth for an honest man, and the devil is prince of the powers of the earth as well as of those of the air.”

“ But not of the water to-night, I trust,” said young Elford, “ to thwart the safe passage of the boat that we look to bring us vital intelligence by our messenger. I will down to the beach; you shall hear the moment it comes in sight.”

Reginald Elford left the house; and hastening to the beach, strolled leisurely along, or stood still, in a mood as pensive as that of the melancholy Jaques, with fixed eye and folded arms, gazing on the "dark blue sea," which, beautiful and serene, lay before his view. The evening was calm: a slight breeze that gently swelled the sails of the vessels as they glided along gave a bracing freshness to the air, but was not sufficient to agitate the boundless plain of waters that spread itself around in every direction; for Reginald now viewed it from the back of Mount Edgcumbe, as he had strolled thither, thinking it possible the boat might (for the greater security of landing its passenger without observation) row round even so far as Cawsand Bay.

So long did Reginald linger, that the sun had already made a "fiery set," leaving on the horizon long traces of his effulgence. These gradually died away, and were succeeded by the grey and dun shades of evening; so that before he thought of retracing his steps the moon arose, silvering the ocean with that sublime

effect, which never fails to attend her amid those watery tides over which she is considered to have so great an influence. As she now glided on her high circle, the heavens, of the deepest blue, showed their radiant fires in myriads of little twinkling stars, whilst the planets “steadily burned,” and shone with a lustre only inferior to that of the regent of the night, whom they seemed to surround as vessels attendant on her course.

The ocean, stilled to gentle murmurs, for the wind had rather dropped than increased at sundown, the beauty and holy calm of the scene, produced in the mind of young Elford an earnest and reflective mood, accompanied by deep feelings of interest, as he thought of the dangers to which the King, his partisans, and his (Elford’s) father, must stand exposed, should failure be the event of the bold and meditated attempt in favour of the unfortunate prince. In such a case he knew there would be no escaping, and that his own death, as well as his father’s, would in all probability be the consequence.

His mind, naturally prone to contemplation (for he lived in days that taught even the young and the gay to think seriously), wandered on from the thoughts of life to those of death; and, swayed by the melancholy of his mood, he looked upon the awful mysteries of futurity, as he did upon the ocean's immensity and depths as they lay before his view — impressed with their sublimity, curious to know the secret of their most wonderful and governing laws, yet trembling to search them out; “and, after all,” thought Elford, “futurity appears to us pleasing or fearful, according to the temper of mind in which it is viewed by us, even as this beautiful ocean appears terrific or inviting, as we look upon it in its calm or its agitated state, so as to fear, or to desire, to venture forth upon its billows.”

Reginald at length gave up all hope of the arrival of the boat with the messenger, so earnestly desired; but willing to take a last look towards the most probable place of landing (should he even yet come), late as it was, he once more strolled along near the battery ere

he returned to the house. Whilst doing so he heard the splash of an oar ; and listening attentively, it seemed to him as if some boat was advancing that had kept as much as possible in shore, and had, in fact, glided unperceived, under the shelter of some large and overhanging trees, that in this quarter dipped their branches at high water (and it was now that time of tide) upon the very surface of the waves.

He watched and listened in breathless attention ; and now perceived, fast advancing towards a flight of steps, which then afforded an entrance into the private gardens, a boat with several persons in it. They were perfectly visible, for one held a lighted torch ; and by its red and glaring beams Reginald perceived the intruders, for such no doubt they were, came dressed fantastically, masked and armed to a man. Exceedingly surprised, if not alarmed, at the sight, he stayed only a moment to be assured their purpose was to land on the grounds of Mount Edgcumbe, and then set off

towards the house with the swiftness of a hunted deer.

As soon as he could find breath enough to speak, he cried out as he entered the hall, to Sir Piers and his companions, "Arm, gentlemen, arm; prepare for your defence; the enemy is upon us: a boat, with men in it, masked and armed, has put in shore. I saw them; they are even now landing in the private gardens."

"We will meet them, then," said Trelawny; "God grant they may not have intercepted the King, if he is rescued and flying from his enemies. Surely they must have gained some intelligence. Masked! why this is an old device: Ford House was betrayed at a masked ball, by men who dared do a deed of treachery, but would not show their faces as traitors. We will not yield tamely, though: what say you, Tremaine? shall we forward and meet them, or shall we stand our ground here?"

"Make fast the doors, that is my counsel," said Colonel Tremaine: "the hall door is a stout one; and if they are only armed with common weapons, they can make no more im-

pression upon it than they could do by battering at the old mew stone rock. These who now come are, no doubt, hawks sent out to fly in a body at the royal eagle: they must have had some intelligence of our purpose; and thinking the King (who, may be, *is* escaped by Burley's means,) had taken refuge here, hither do they come to seize upon him. Draw, gentlemen, and let me have the honour to conduct your defence; that is, if Sir Piers Edgumbe will allow me to take the lead in his house."

"Stay, Colonel Tremain; have patience, Trelawny; hear me Reginald Elford," cried Sir Piers; "you are all mad; you know not what you do; your very eagerness may be the means to ruin that cause for which you would all gladly die. How know you that these men have received any intelligence of our purpose? or come hither thinking to find the King? We must keep the peace at this crisis at any risk; a broil now with any of the Plymouth people, or with any of Colonel Holborn's men, would ruin all. We might have a guard

placed in the house, Burley might arrive with the liberated captive, and by our precipitation and madness he might have no place left in which to shelter his head. Hear me, put up your arms, let lights be brought; let the old hall blaze as if we were all met at a merry-making; throw abroad the doors, so as not even to have an appearance of concealment; admit these men as revellers, since they come in that guise; speak them fair; let them have wine; and call hither my daughter and her companions: we will seem gay, friends, though a heavy heart hides itself under a light smile. These appearances may disprove all suspicion; and if not, if they come to offer us wrong, why we have each a sword by our sides, gentlemen, and we can but draw when necessity commands it. What think you? Say I not well, Tremain? You are an old officer, and ought to know that in war a well-played stratagem is often the surest mode of defence."

"You are right, Sir Piers," said Tremain: "we can but resort to arms if we find ourselves in actual danger; and, after all, who knows but

that this may be some mad prank of the young and idle royalists, who have now nothing to do but to divert themselves with the show of those alarms that will soon enough become real, if the west be once again in arms. And if they are true men, we may show them where a game, worthy of men, is to be played out."

"I will go order all myself," said Sir Piers. "Here Gregory, William, knaves, where loiter ye? set open the hall doors, bring lights, bring wine, and call hither your young mistress and her companions."

Sir Piers busied himself in preparation; and as he did so Trelawny whispered Elford, "Let us," he said, "mingle with these men: let each comer be closely watched; so that if there is the least cause to fear foul play we may be ready at a moment's warning. You will keep a sharp eye and a ready hand."

"Never fear me," said Elford; "I will not lack caution."

CHAP. VII.

Must I give way and room to your rash choler ?

Shall I be frighted when a madman stares ?

SHAKSPEARE.

ALL was now prepared ; and soon after a band of persons, seven or eight in number, each carrying (what was then something unusual) a light shield and a drawn sword, advanced, headed by their torch-bearer, towards the house.

Sir Piers and his company stood ready to receive them : the foremost masker led on ; and graciously saluting the master of the house, declared his purpose to be no other than an attempt to renew a good old custom, once followed in Devon, but since the civil wars had divided friends and neighbours much fallen into neglect and decay, — being no other than the custom of the young and the gay of any town or village to go forth in masked companies, to revel

at the house of the chief person of the parish, on any day that was held to be one of more than ordinary rejoicing in his family. "And this, Sir Piers," continued the spokesman, "being the nineteenth of June, the birthday of your absent son, we are come to show you that we have not forgotten one who was our gallant young companion, though he is now far away from us; we come, therefore, to give you joy, to sing you a song, to dance a round or so with these fair ladies, to drink a health to the heir of your house, and then to bid you a good night."

"You are welcome, gentlemen, for such a true honest purpose," said Sir Piers; "and though times are not so gay with us as they were before these civil discords, yet do I, who am old, and something worn with care, rejoice to see that the young can still bid defiance to him, and can have courage enough to renew those harmless sports that have been cried down by puritans, alike from the pulpit and from the drum-head of every military preaching. In faith, gentlemen, you are right welcome. I fill

this cup to the health you would propose—that of my absent son. You will favour me by pledging it in a brimming goblet of wine.

“Gladly, Sir Piers,” said he who had hitherto acted as spokesman; “but let us first take a round with these fair ladies; we come not unprovided for mirth: our recorders are with us; and one who can touch a viol with as lively a hand as ever made light feet trip it to jocund music. I would, with your good leave, lead out your fair daughter, would she grace me so much as to become my partner in the movements of a pavan.”

“A pavan!” said Sir Piers: “nay, not in so grave and majestic a dance as that is,—a dance only fitted for courts at a solemn revel; rather choose one where all may join. The country round was a dance in my young days that every fair damsel loved for its light step and lively measure. Let it be a country round.”

“With all my heart, sir,” said the masker; and advancing to Mistress Robina Edgcumbe, he solicited and obtained her hand as his partner. Reginald Elford offered to lead out Agnes;

but she made some excuse, and said she would dance with him presently. Sir Piers seemed perfectly satisfied that the masked revellers were really no other than they professed themselves to be : but Reginald did *not* feel satisfied ; for he fancied that, in one of them, he recognised the very last person he would desire to see at Mount Edgcumbe, and especially at such a moment.

He watched narrowly this suspected person ; and, in order the better to do so, did not offer again to lead out Agnes to the dance. He now observed that the stranger looked round the room with an enquiring eye, before he ventured to select a partner ; and rather hung back, till Agnes chanced to pass near him. In a moment he was by her side, and after speaking a few words to her in a low whispering voice, he led her forth to dance.

Elford, who now recollected the indifference with which she had at first treated his offer to become her partner, and concluded that as he declined dancing she would do the same, felt exceedingly angered and irritated by her easy

preference of the stranger; and now stood watching her with all the bitter feelings of a lover suffering under a slight from his betrothed mistress, and not the least action of hers escaped his jealous eye.

After she had gone down the dance (for a country round was nothing more than what we now call a country dance), and stood at the bottom with her masked partner, he observed that the incognito whispered to her, and that she listened with an earnestness and attention that convinced him the speaker could be no stranger. At length, the dancing having ceased, wine was brought forward, and a full cup being proposed, the maskers did not hesitate to withdraw their visors, as they drank to the pledge.

Sir Piers, delighted to find that one or two of the party were the sons of gentlemen in the neighbourhood well known to him, lost all feelings of distrust; and ever anxious to stir up the zeal of his friends, and especially in social hours of mirth when hearts are full and open, he asked the young man who acted the part of spokesman, "if he knew any toast that ought

to be given even before that of his own son, whose birthday they had not forgotten?"

"Ay, marry, Sir Piers," replied the reveller; "there is one toast I would willingly give, and that, I think, no one here will refuse to pledge, since the friends of Sir Piers Edgumbe were ever those of loyalty. I fill this cup to the health of King Charles, whom God preserve and restore to his loving subjects of Cornwall and Devon."

"Let the pledge go round," said Sir Piers. "Gentlemen, a thousand welcomes and a thousand thanks."

"But there is one present," whispered Elford to Trelawny, "who keeps in the back ground, though he was forward enough at the dancing, and who has neither raised his visor, nor tasted the cup. But he shall not thus carry it off with impunity. Offer it to him Trelawny, and if he refuses ——"

The cup was offered and refused.

Elford rushed forward; and with that impetuosity which had on so many occasions mastered his better sense, when the stings of jealousy

and suspicion roused up his passions, he rashly exclaimed, "Beware, gentlemen, beware what you do; there is a traitor among you, and yonder is the man."

All eyes were now fixed on the masker.

"Disarm him, friends," cried Elford: "he is come hither for no honest purpose, else would he not fear to show his face, and to do as those have done who are of his company."

"My purpose," replied the incognito, "is, may be, more honest than your words, since they belie an honourable man. I will not be disarmed; I have done nothing to merit this violence."

"You will find danger in resistance," said Elford.

"Talk not to me of danger," cried the masker with spirit; "think not I fear it. Where is it not to be found? In these times we can go nowhere but danger lurks in our path; if we rise up, or take rest, we are in danger of a thousand casualties. You, sir, would teach me from whom, in this company, I may expect it?"

"I scorn to reply to words like these," said

Elford. "You have stolen upon us under this disguise for some foul purpose: but you are known here, sir; yes, known, and I proclaim you as Amias Radcliffe, the rebel, the slayer of Sir Shilton Calmady. Unmask, if I speak falsely, and disprove my words."

"I will unmask, indeed," replied the young stranger, "but my business is not with you. I would speak with Sir Piers Edgcumbe, and alone."

"Master Amias Radcliffe," said Sir Piers, "I little thought, after our late meeting, to see you again in my house, and in this guise, too! I beseech you, whatever you may have to impart, that you would speak it in the presence of my friends; since I can have nothing to say to you of a private nature. Your principles, your opinions, and, above all, the recollection I have of one unfortunate action of yours, must at all times render your company a pain to me: I am loth to speak thus, since I once had the good fortune to do you a service; and as little would I, willingly, use discourtesy to a guest who sought my roof in peace. Yet there is a cause,

and you know it,—I never can receive into my friendship or confidence the man who, in upholding rebellion, killed my dearest friend, Sir Shilton Calmady.”

“I shall not force any confidence on you, Sir Piers, against your will,” said young Radcliffe, haughtily: “I came hither, as I believed, to do you a service; but if you will reject it thus, if I am not worthy even to be heard in what I would say, be the peril on your own head. I leave you, Sir Piers. Farewell !”

He bowed to Sir Piers, and turned an expressive look on Agnes, as he bade her adieu. On quitting the hall, he passed close by Elford; and said, as he did so, in a low but determined tone, “If you want ought with me, sir, I am at hand. I shall walk slowly on towards the landing-place, near the battery.”

“I will attend you, sir,” said Elford; and he turned and spoke apart to Trelawny, as Amias left the hall.

The suddenness of the whole transaction greatly surprised Sir Piers Edgcumbe, who now, on addressing himself to the maskers, in

order to obtain some explanation of what appeared to be so extraordinary, learnt to his extreme vexation that Amias Radcliffe had not only intruded on him, but on the very persons in whose company he came. One of them confessed that he had known Radcliffe as a gallant gentleman, who had in former times shared with the young men in the neighbourhood in their games and sports. He added, that on this evening he believed Amias had attempted to reach Mount Edgcumbe alone, but could not obtain admission, (in fact, Sir Piers had issued orders that no stranger should be suffered to cross after noon,) and that hearing of the purposed revel of himself and his companions, who had obtained a promise of access from the gardener, through the private entrance, Radcliffe prevailed, so as to admit him to join the revellers, as an old friend and companion of their sports.

Reginald Elford lost not a word of this explanation, which tended to make the conduct of Radcliffe appear even yet more suspicious. He had no sooner heard this statement than he

rushed out of the house, and speedily overtook Amias, who purposely loitered on his way, no doubt expecting such an encounter. Breathless alike with running and with rage, Elford could scarcely demand, in articulate words, an explanation of the purpose which had produced a conduct so extraordinary on the part of Radcliffe.

The accused fired, in his turn, at the abrupt and passionate manner in which he was questioned, and only replied, that when he knew by what authority Reginald Elford had a right to expect any explanation, he would give one, but not till then.

“By what authority! by that of an injured man,” cried Elford; “injured by you. Have you forgot, sir, our last meeting, and what then passed?”

“No, sir,” said Radcliffe; “my memory is something too good to forget the conduct of a man who seems to forget his pretensions to the character of a gentleman. If it is your purpose to fasten a second quarrel on me, I am ready to meet it now, or at any time. Yet know, sir,

and I speak it from no motives of fear, as you may find if you persist, that my religion forbids me to shed the blood of any man without it is in a lawful cause of quarrel, or in my own defence. I would, therefore, rather pardon your madness than resent it. Return, then, to the house ; sleep upon your anger ; and when you rise up in the morning, think how far your passion has misled your reason in this broil ; and do not force me to break God's laws against my better sense and conscience."

"Your conscience is as hypocritical as your pretensions," cried Elford ; "you know that you have attempted, foully attempted, to injure me, and that in the most delicate quarter ; to supplant me in the affections of a lady to whom I have long been affianced, and to sow the seeds of discord between us : we had no distrusts of each other till you came in the way ; and it is my belief that you this night stole to Mount Edgcumbe for no other purpose than that of clandestinely seeking to gain speech with Mistress Agnes."

"And what if you have spoken truth?"

said Radcliffe; "what concern may it be of yours?"

"My sword shall answer that question," said Elford. "Draw, sir, draw on the instant; and either swear to me by that religion, which you just now vaunted as your governing principle, swear, I say, by Him in whose presence we both stand, never more to see this lady without my sanction, or take the consequences of your own dishonourable conduct. I give you the choice."

"It is made, sir," replied Radcliffe, as he drew his sword, and threw himself into an attitude of defence; "I will take no such oath; you are mad with the most unreasonable jealousy that ever possessed the brain of man."

"Be your blood then upon your own head," said Elford; and he prepared to rush on his opponent. Ere he could do so, his arm was forcibly arrested by some one, who had come upon him unawares; whilst another person also advanced, and drawing apart Radcliffe, spoke to him in a low, earnest, and persuasive tone.

Elford turned round and saw Colonel Tre-

maine. "You are mad, indeed, Reginald," he said, "as mad as the young fellow there, but just now, told you you were. Zounds, man, is this a time for tilting with swords, in the cold moonlight, at the instigation of a hot-blooded passion, as if the devil drove you on ; and that, too, at a time when such a stake as we have in hand must be played for or lost ? Keep fighting for a better cause than a foolish brawl like this about Mistress Agnes Piper's bright eyes. What if she did dance with a roundhead, whilst he had his cropped hair hid under a mask, and you stood looking on ; why, where is the harm done that nothing but bloodshed can make it right again ? Put up, I say, put up ; or I will show you what it is to be enlisted under my orders ; you shall have an arrest, as military as it may be, to cool your fury. I allow no fighting where I command, till I give the word for it."

"Let me go, Colonel Tremaine ; unhand me, I beseech you," said Elford ; "you do not know my injuries, the repeated injuries, I have sustained from Radcliffe. Let me have sway :

I will not be fooled out of my requital, now a fair occasion offers for it."

Colonel Tremaine swore a broad and military oath, well suited to an old officer, who had long been in command amongst the cavaliers. He swore that Reginald should fight with no one that night; and accompanying his oath by suddenly snatching the sword out of Elford's hand, the fiery young man was left with no weapon of offence, except it might be his tongue; a thing as prone to mischief, and as sharp in moments of unbridled passion, as the sword he had so lately lost. Nor did he delay to use it, and that with much bitterness; for turning round towards Radcliffe (with whom Trelawny had been in conversation), he said in a fierce and determined manner these few but remarkable words:—"Think, sir, of what I have said; or, trust me, your life shall answer for it."

"For shame, Elford," said Tremaine, "thus to threaten a man, who truly hath committed nothing worthy such resentment. Had I not known and loved thee from a boy, I could myself quarrel with thee for these unreasonable

starts of passion. But you are in truth an Elford, brave and generous, but as furious as a tempest which sweeps down all before it, when once the storm is up. Come, come along with me, you shall to bed, and sleep off this humour, or crush a cup with me for company : for truly you are not to be trusted with yourself or with your own passion."

So saying, Tremaine drew Elford back to the house, and left Radcliffe to find his way down to the boat, which speedily ferried him across the river.

CHAP. VIII.

Farewell my home, my home no longer now,
Witness of many a calm and happy day ;
And thou, fair eminence, upon whose brow
Dwells the last sunshine of the evening ray,
Farewell ! Mine eyes no longer shall pursue
The westering sun beyond the utmost height,
When slowly he forsakes the fields of light.

SOUTHEY.

THUS ended Amias Radcliffe's attempt to obey the commands of Gertrude Coppelstone, who had instructed him to seek a *private* interview with Sir Piers Edgcumbe, and to warn him, that both himself and his friends might be on their guard, and not venture to Warleigh on the evening of the twentieth of June, unless his party should be strong enough to bid defiance to all dangers. Had Gertrude been entirely explicit in communicating her fears to Radcliffe, it is probable, that notwithstanding all that happened to discourage him, he would have persisted in demanding a private interview with

Sir Piers Edgcumbe; but the difficulty of her situation, her anxiety, from motives of duty, to spare her father (as much as she could spare him) exposure in this affair, had produced so much embarrassment when she talked with Amias, that her confidence had been but half reposed.

Radcliffe, as he had often proved himself to be, even to his enemies, was of a generous and honourable disposition; notwithstanding, like many other young men of spirit in those unhappy times, he had been misled by fanatical ideas of liberty and patriotism. His love of classical literature had led him much to the study of Roman history,—a study that, with young men, before they have sufficient judgment to weigh well the benefits resulting to the people from a monarchical form of government, often creates the most enthusiastic sentiments, and the wildest speculations about the glory of a republic; till, forgetful of the difference existing between countries and times, and the difference, also, of characters and circumstances, between Pagan Rome and Christian England, they

fancy it a high virtue to upset and overturn all the most ancient and useful institutions, because, forsooth, they are possessed with the opinion, that liberty cannot exist where there is regal authority ! Even just laws become, in some measure, an offence to them ; and these they would abrogate, though by the most violent means ; never once reflecting that licentiousness, the greatest enemy of true liberty, will inevitably accompany rebellion ; and that when once the fabric of wholesome rule has been broken down, those very factions which have helped in the work of destruction are sure to send forth some one who assumes the office of dictator, in the attempt to bring order out of chaos, and who is often found to be a thousand times more tyrannical than the most arbitrary king that ever sat upon the throne.

Cromwell (though no man could have better wielded the sceptre, had it been his by natural right, and not by the crime of shedding the King's blood to confirm his power,) is not wholly free from the charge of tyranny ; witness his contempt of Magna Charta, that boast of Englishmen, when he found it stood in the way

of his own ambition and arbitrary designs ; since, in terms remarkable only for their coarseness, he dismissed the poor judges who pleaded for it, averring that it should not control his actions, and bidding them “not suffer lawyers to prate about what it would not serve him to hear.”

Radcliffe was enthusiastic enough to feel the glow the name of liberty inspires in the young and generous breast ; but he was not old enough to value the means most likely to render liberty both permanent and honourable to his country. Thus had he been misled ; and, like all hasty advocates of rebellion, he had helped to pull down the old fabric of the government without being able to lay one solid foundation stone of the new fabric that was to occupy its place. From mistaken notions he had been induced to espouse the popular side of the question ; yet his just and better feelings, and every motive that can influence an honest mind, revolted at the thoughts of treachery being used even in support of his favourite cause. His opinions were too deeply rooted to allow him to

turn round, as his guardian had done, to join the King's service; nor did he wish to reseat that unhappy prince upon the throne from which he had been driven, under the pretext of being an arbitrary ruler, who was governed by vicious counsellors. His Presbyterian principles, also, prevented his desiring to see the restoration of that church which acknowledged the authority of bishops: but his whole soul revolted from the base pursuit that had been employed against the luckless and inoffensive clergy; and from the means employed by the Scots, first to dupe, and then to sell the King to the parliament, at a time, also, when that unfortunate monarch had been led to trust himself in their hands.

Not less did he sorrow to see the descendant of a line so royal and so noble betrayed to his worst enemies, and lying a prisoner at the mercy of those who, he thought, acted something too sternly whilst advocating the cause of civil and religious liberty. In his opinion, the sins of the sovereign had been bitterly atoned for in the sufferings of the man; and could he without (as he deemed it) betraying the cause of the people

have freed Charles from his captivity, Radcliffe would have done so at the risk even of his own life. Though not trusted by any one with a full knowledge of those measures going forward to liberate the King, and to bring him, if possible, in safety to the west of England (so that he might there head the royalists who were ready to rise in his behalf), yet, nevertheless, Radcliffe did suspect something was going on in favour of the august captive, and the information, slight as it had been, which he received from Gertrude, confirmed him in this belief; and that his guardian had mingled himself in the plot, with a view, in some way or other, to turn it to his own profit and advantage, and very possibly to betray it, if such should ultimately prove the most likely means of benefiting himself.

Copplestone's temper, never other than gloomy and morose, since these plots had been going forward, had become stern, and at times almost savage to those about him. Of all persons on earth he most hated Radcliffe; and so much had he of late vented his ill humour upon the young man, that Amias had resolved

to quit his godfather's house, and at any risk (poor and almost penniless as he was kept by Copplesstone) not to return to it, till he should be authorised, by coming of age, to claim his lawful rights and inheritance. The fear, however, of some coercive measures being adopted against him induced him to conceal his intentions till they were ripe for execution; but a circumstance we have now to relate made him think of putting them into practice sooner than he had originally determined.

On the morning of the twentieth day of June, Gertrude had waited with feelings of the most anxious suspense to gain, if but for a moment, an interview with Radcliffe; but so busy was her father in preparation for the expected meeting of the royalists that he was every where and rested nowhere. His eye seemed to be constantly on the watch, so that she dared not, during the early part of the morning, quit her chamber to seek Amias, and there was no servant near in whom she could feel sufficient confidence to trust him with the conveyance of a letter of any consequence. She was compelled to wait the event, and she did so with

that sort of determined resolution which borders on despair.

The more she thought of what would in all probability be the fate of her uncle and of Sir William Bastard (should they come in the full confidence of unsuspecting men to the meeting), the more she dreaded lest Radcliffe should have failed in his mission to Sir Piers. Her fears as they rose gave strength to her resolution, so that she felt capable of any high act of courage that the circumstances of the time might demand. True courage is of a noble nature; and in the hopes of what it may accomplish in a good cause, it forgets the dangers that must be encountered in the attempt to bring it to a happy issue. There is nothing little, nothing selfish, in its character, since it becomes even a willing sacrifice at the altar of honour and of truth. Such was the character of that feeling which filled the breast of Gertrude: she knew well that where danger is paramount, those who would step in to preserve the innocent must not pause between the hour and the act; that whatever is done must be

done suddenly ; and that however commendable prudence may be on ordinary occasions, in affairs of such a nature it degenerates into cowardice, and often producing doubt ultimately leads to failure and destruction.

She reflected seriously on these things ; and, in a moment, a thought darted into her mind that changed at once all her doubts into certainty. *She would act*, and no longer deliberate. Yes, she was sure of it, there was a means left by which she might save her friends, at all events she would attempt it. Her plan thus suddenly resolved upon was as suddenly put in execution ; since it was her last and only hope. She must first, however, see Radcliffe, to learn how far he had, or had not, been enabled to execute her commission with Sir Piers.

Whilst engaged in these thoughts she was surprised by the appearance of Dame Gee, who, under pretext of satisfying the superstitious enquiry of old Copplestone, relative to the success of his dark schemes, but in fact to assist her own, made a point, on this day, of being at Warleigh. She had been closeted with her

patron, and the intelligence she had obtained, by means of her accomplice, Coleman, served but to heighten the fears of Gertrude when that intelligence was now communicated to her by this artful dealer in spells and horoscopes. Gertrude was confirmed in her resolves.

She obtained speech with Radcliffe for a few minutes, and learnt from him the failure of his mission. Having ascertained this, with the agony of feeling that defies all description, she hastened to execute her plan. She wrote a few lines, addressed to Roger Rowle, enclosing the token; and bade him as he valued the life of her uncle and Sir William Bastard, that he should without delay warn both those gentlemen of the probable danger that would accrue to themselves and to their friends did they on that night venture near Warleigh. Dame Gee, who was eager, from motives of revenge, to disappoint the plans of Copplestone, engaged to find a messenger who should set out instantly for the glen of Lidford; since all depended on Roger Rowle's receiving the letter in time to *prevent* the royalists from attending at the

appointed hour. Should Roger Rowle be *now* absent from the glen, Gertrude felt assured that all was lost. Dame Gee's concern to thwart Copplestone was not less earnest, though from a far less noble motive, than her own. In her late interview with him she had once more implored him to save her poor idiot son from death: the morrow was destined for his execution; since the trooper he had wounded by a blow on the head (certainly given more from folly than ill intention) was dead, and his fellow-soldiers clamoured for justice being done on the boy who had been his destroyer. All her efforts, however, proved vain: Copplestone had his own reasons for not choosing, at this moment, to offend the troop of Captain Butler, therefore the lad must die, without his interference to save him. Dame Gee, instead of sorrowing as a mother at the approaching hour, determined to prepare for it with the malice of a fiend, by making it one of a deep and signal revenge. Over the immediate authors of his death she had no power, but over the fate of the man who *could* have saved him, and *would not* do it, she

had much; and it was but to watch her opportunity to use it effectually, as she thought, for his ruin. After having fulfilled her promise to Gertrude by despatching a messenger to the glen with the letter, she lingered at Warleigh for the rest of the day; a thing not unusual with her, after having held an interview with her patron respecting his fortunes.

It was towards evening, on this eventful day, when Copplestone, (after having despatched one or two of his people with letters in different quarters, and with a mystery that characterised all his actions,) whilst returning to his own chamber, met Amias Radcliffe, who drew back to let him pass on. He looked on his godson with a stern and lowering expression as he bade him “go on to the chamber, for he wished to speak a word with him.” Radcliffe obeyed in silence.

“So, sir,” said Copplestone, in a tone that was peculiarly bitter, — “so, sir, you are busy to-day, it appears; and that idleness which, generally speaking, makes the sum of the employment of your time, seems to be exchanged for an

active, meddling, and prying curiosity. This is the third time I have this day detected you intruding on the privacy of my apartments. You have been questioning my people, too, I find; and whispering, also, with my daughter. I marked you; it did not escape my eye. For what purpose did you so? Mistress Gertrude has formerly been little honoured by your attentions that you should, all at once, grow into confidence with her. I will know the matter of it."

"Sir John Copplestone," said Radcliffe, "I am not your servant, nor your slave, that the most indifferent action of mine should be called to an account, as if I were harbouring treason against you. You have of late treated me with more than usual harshness; and brief as the time is that remains for me to be under your guardianship and roof, I shall make it shorter. I intend to leave your house, and to remove from your presence an object so hateful to you as myself, for I am here used worse than your very dogs; since, though they bear your stripes, they have their wants, such as their natures

demand, supplied to them in due proportion, whilst I am denied the most ordinary things necessary to mine."

"Have you done, sir?" said Copplesstone.

"No, Sir John," continued Radcliffe, "I have not done. You keep me penniless, whilst you receive and manage all my means. I must not move, nor ask a question in your household, though it be but to demand the time of day, without suspicion; all liberty of action is denied me, and on every occasion you seek, like the wolf in the fable, to find a cause of quarrel with me; your purpose, for aught I know, may be as wicked. These things have made me resolve on quitting you. I can but starve out of doors, though I doubt not I shall find friends to lend me some means of support till I can lawfully claim — as, trust me, I shall do — a full account of what is my own."

"Of what is thy own, rash boy!" said Copplesstone; "what is thine will be soon told down — a prodigal's portion, such as a prodigal father left to a beggared son."

"It is false!" exclaimed Radcliffe: "I will

not hear my father's memory thus slandered, and by you : my father was a gentleman noble in word and action ; the blood which filled his veins was alike ancient and well derived ; nor did he ever disgrace it by any act that showed he had degenerated from his ancestors. He was unfortunate, and in nothing so much, may be, as with his connection with yourself."

The countenance of Copplestone grew dark as night at hearing these words. " Your father was like *yourself*," he replied, " daring and unthankful. The remnant of his bankrupt estate I saved from total ruin to serve his worthless son ; to whom, in the weakness of pity, and in order to repair his injured fortunes and his fallen name, I offered my own daughter — the heiress of Warleigh — but my offer was rejected."

" Say rather," exclaimed Radcliffe, with great warmth, " you offered her to the HEIR of Warleigh ; for in the sight of God I am such, though you juggled my father out of his ancient inheritance, by taking it as a mortgage from him, to serve him in friendship ; and that, too, at a time

when he suffered from those very necessities your own villany had helped to bring upon him. Treat me well, or I know not but I may yet stir to make good my claim."

To describe the countenance of Coppelstone on hearing these threatenings of his justly incensed godson would be impossible. He appeared suddenly possessed as with the spirit of a fiend: his passions knew no restraint; and though the violence of them for a moment rendered him incapable of speech, yet his eyes flashed like lighted brands, and every muscle of his face was in action,—so diabolical was the malice that stirred up in his soul every latent feeling of hatred, jealousy, and suspicion.

"*Thou* the heir of Warleigh!" he said; "*thou* claim what is mine, by forfeit mine on a just debt! and far short in payment of that debt, had it been claimed to the full amount. *Thou* do this! *Thou*, a poor, beggared, insolent boy! *Thou* art heir to nothing but thy father's sins, and, may be, to his fate, if the Lord gives thee up as he did thy father!"

"To thy hands to be dealt with!" said

Radcliffe, who in the extreme degree of just resentment that he felt at this moment, on hearing his father's fate thus barbarously named, forgot all his predetermined prudence: "I believe it, and that my death would be the surest bond to afford you security in your accursed possession."

Copplestone on hearing this trembled with passion: he set his teeth together, compressed his lips, glanced his eye with the wildness of a maniac, and grasped the haft of his dagger, as he turned and confronted Radcliffe. Suddenly he let go the weapon, and raising his clenched hand, struck his godson a blow, accompanying the action with an oath too dreadful to be written down. Radcliffe turned upon him, apparently with the intention to crush him to the earth. But, recollecting himself, by a violent effort at self-command, he forbore, exclaiming, "No! not against the father of Gertrude will I raise my hand, however I may be injured — not against an old man. Sir John Copplestone, this night I leave your house — and for ever. On the day that makes me of age, prepare to

render up a full account—trust me, I shall demand it.”

Having spoken these few words in a tone scarcely articulate from the struggles of suppressed passion, with a countenance pale as death, he rushed past his guardian, flew towards his own chamber, and prepared instantly to quit the house.

CHAP. IX.

Thither full fraught with mischievous revenge,
Accursed, and in a cursed hour she hies.

MILTON.

BEFORE Copplestone could recover from the surprise into which he had been thrown on learning the resolution, to quit his house, thus vehemently expressed by his godson, a youth whom he had provoked and misused in a manner beyond bearing, he almost repented that he had driven things to such a pass; for till this hour, though Amias sometimes spoke his feelings, all their quarrels had ended in Sir John coming off the victor; his godson being, generally, brought into that subjection of spirit, which formed no small part of the tyranny so long exercised over him.

Ere Copplestone could now finally resolve how to act, or even before he could move from the spot, Captain Coleman entered, and in a

manner that showed his errand, whatever it might be, was of importance, and demanded haste in its execution. The Captain was fully armed, perfectly sober ; and instead of displaying that bold, impudent, and careless air, which he generally assumed as most suited to the gamester and the bully, he appeared with a sullen and resolute expression depicted in his countenance : it seemed to indicate that he had worked himself up to play a part requiring more courage than he could muster, without a strong effort of mind. He put a letter into Coplestone's hand, but did not utter one word.

Sir John seized it eagerly, opened it as fast as his trembling hands would let him, and ran over the contents. As he read, a dark and ominous smile stole over his stern features : it was the smile of satisfied malice ; and suddenly looking up, he said to Coleman, in the fanatical language he was often in the habit of using, and chiefly when about to consummate any act of more than ordinary wickedness, "The Lord gave them a king in anger, and took him away in his wrath. All prospers — to-night, so says

Colonel Holborn's letter — to-night will they be all given up to us as a spoil. Thou art come for the warrant of arrest," he added, as he went up to the red velvet cabinet, and took from it a paper. "Here is the warrant; the good Colonel would fain have it in his own possession; it is, assuredly, the fullest authority for what he does. I have warrants from the council of state for more than one man. Here is that which shall find its way as far as Exeter, ere twenty-four hours be past. The instrument which you seek at my hands is to sanction the arrest of the Governor of Plymouth Castle, who had agreed on this night to betray it to the friends of — I say not whom. The light of day fails apace: would I had my lamp. Stay — it is not needful, I can yet see, this is it: here, take it and begone. Give the warrant into no hand but the good Colonel's; and tell him who sent you on with this letter that when he shall hear the alarm bell ring out from the old tower then may he advance, for then will be the hour. Dost thou mark me?"

"I do," said Coleman, "and I trust you

are well advised, Sir John, and well prepared in what you are about to do ; for you will have devils to deal with when the swords are out. I know them all :—they will fight like game cocks, and never give in but by force.”

“ Numbers shall compel them,” replied Coplestone, “ and we know that, like as in Joshua’s host, the Lord will be on our side and fight for us. Tarry not thou, but begone. I must look to my instructions. As you descend, bid one of my people bring hither my lamp : it is dusk, and I cannot see to read all these papers—they are the council’s orders for our full authority in dealing with these men as the necessity of the time or circumstances may require, and as our wisdom shall judge best, even should it be to use summary justice with the conspirators.”

Coleman departed ; and a servant having brought the lamp as directed, Sir John Coplestone sat down to a table, in order to examine a packet of papers he had taken from the red velvet cabinet, at the time he selected from that depository the warrant he had just de-

livered to Coleman. No sooner did he now lay his hand on the papers, than he started up, exclaiming, "I have erred, the twilight deceived me, I am a ruined man; I have given the wrong warrant; all will be discovered; the affair will take wind; I shall loose my recompense; our plan will be ruined, and all lost. I must after; Coleman cannot yet have cleared the grounds."

So saying, Sir John Copplestone, forgetful of all else, forgetful even of the red velvet cabinet that he had left open in his extreme haste, rushed from the room in quest of Coleman, hoping it might not yet be too late to put him in possession of the right warrant to secure the Governor of Plymouth Castle.

Dame Gee saw Copplestone rush down the great stairs, the warrant in his hand, and calling on his servants, might any be within hearing, to run forward and stop Coleman with all speed. As if the genius of evil (under whose guardianship Sir John had so long found protection) at this moment deserted him, and left him exposed to all the malice of his enemies, a thought, sug-

gested by the evil one, at once crossed the mind of Dame Gee, as she saw the precipitancy with which her ancient patron, and now the object of her most determined revenge, had rushed from his chamber in pursuit of Coleman. It was but the idea of the moment : she lost no time, however, in acting upon it, and glided into the chamber of Sir John's secret counsels with all that cool, firm, and collected energy of mind, so necessary to effect her purpose ; and, though her life should be the forfeit, her resolution was taken to execute it without delay : every instant became precious, for she knew Copplestone would almost immediately return.

The door of the apartment stood open : the lamp was burning on the table ; there lay the warrants to sanction treachery and villany to the fullest extent. She never paused to look on these papers : indeed she thought not of them ; but glanced her eye on the red velvet cabinet that stood open before her, every drawer and shuttle at her command.

“ It is done,” said Dame Gee, as, without

the pause of even a moment for reflection, she opened the centre drawer of the cabinet, as if she had been as perfectly well acquainted with its intricacies as their iniquitous master himself could have been : she drew forth a roll of parchment carefully tied up and endorsed. “ It is done,” she repeated, “ Copplestone’s ruin is in my hand. My boy will die — but THIS shall revenge him.”

She rushed from the apartment; and knowing every chamber and gallery of Warleigh, she walked boldly forward, neither looked to the right nor to the left, and without the least signal being given to announce her presence, opened Radcliffe’s door and stood before him, at the very moment, his hasty preparations being finished, he was about to quit his guardian’s roof for ever. Radcliffe’s state of mind was not such as to make him look with complacency on any intruder at this instant, and he asked Dame Gee how she dared to thrust herself on him without permission.

“ Those who bring good deeds in their hands to win a welcome need ask none,” she said,

“and I hold one in mine that for you will be the fairest you ever looked upon. Swear to me, that as you hope for happiness in this world, or in that which is to come, swear you will this night spare nor speed nor entreaty to save my poor foolish boy’s life; swear this, and I will give you the means to claim, to redeem, to repossess your right, as the true heir of WARLEIGH.”

“You are mad, woman,” said Radcliffe, “mad, how can I save your son? He is condemned to lose his life for having killed one of Butler’s troopers in the late fray. How can I save him? and what is this you tell me about my being heir to Warleigh? I should have been such I know, had not my father mortgaged and forfeited the estate.”

“He did not forfeit it,” replied Dame Gee: “I do not say you *can* save my son; but oh, you may try to do it; and though a miserable creature in the sight of all the world, he is still my son, dearer to my sight than the light of day. He is the child I have borne into life through travail and sorrow: the babe that sucked my

breast, and that is as dear to me, even in his folly, as if he had all the finest sense of man. Nay, he is dearer; for like a bird that is nursed with fondness, the weak and frail child is ever the dearest. The constant trouble he has been to me has made him a thousand times more beloved than had he never given me a moment's care; for he was always helpless, and could not have lived to die, as he will die, but for my care. You will try to save him; you know Colonel Holborn—he is Butler's colonel; speak but a word for mercy to him; and, may be, he will spare the idiot in pity to his folly, though he spare him to live in a prison and in chains all the days of his life."

There was feeling, there was even eloquence in the faltering voice, in the asking eye, and in the affectionate manner of Dame Gee, as she pleaded with Radcliffe to endeavour to save her son; so powerful is maternal love that it can animate and soften the hardest breast. The very wolves love their young: no wonder, therefore, that in the heart of a woman, otherwise so barren of all that was good, so stubborn,

as was Dame Gee's, there existed, nevertheless, that strong and first impulse of nature, wisely implanted by the God of all mercy even in a savage breast, the instinct to cherish, and to feel the tenderness of solicitude to preserve the being she has brought into light and life.

Radcliffe was not unmoved : he told her that he feared his interference would be unavailing ; but promised, notwithstanding, to make the attempt to plead for the unfortunate boy. Dame Gee was softened and comforted by this assurance ; for though little prone to gratitude, she could feel it at this moment for the man who had consented, if he could do so, to preserve her son.

“ The good act,” she said, “ shall not go unrequited : it shall be rewarded, even before it is done. Take this parchment ; keep it carefully : it is the mortgage bond of Warleigh estate, that Coppelstone had no right to withhold. I have no time now for further explanation ; I must fly this place, else should he return, and finding me here be led to suspect that I had given to you the deed, he might take

my life in revenge, for he knows I have practised what is not warranted by the laws of the parliament, though he has often employed me to do so."

Radcliffe, astonished at what he heard, took the parchments almost mechanically from her ; and asked her how she came by them, or by what means she had obtained any knowledge of his father's or his own affairs.

" I have no time to tell all," she said : " there are more papers than this which ought to be yours ; yet this is of most value. Have you forgotten the death-bed of your servant Grace-on-High Gabriel ?"

" A light seems to break in upon my mind," replied Radcliffe ; for at this instant he recollected that Gabriel had long been the confidential agent of his guardian ; and the dark hints he threw out when he found himself dying, his broken confession, and many other little circumstances, now recurred to his memory in full force.

" There was," continued Dame Gee, " a horn box, containing papers and letters in his doub-

let: you may remember he asked for it; but I had secured it—at that time for a purpose, I confess it to you not without shame, that was to answer an end of my own. Had Sir John Copplestone saved my son, I might—no matter, he did not, would not, consent to save him. I learnt, from those papers of Gabriel, a secret that was of moment; and you owe the parchments which you now hold in your hand to the knowledge so gained by me. Longer I dare not stay. Farewell; I have given you the means to do yourself right, and you have given me the promise to spare me a mother's agony, by endeavouring to preserve the life of my poor son. Away; tarry not here. Farewell; may you be happy."

She hurried from his presence, stole softly but swiftly down the stairs, and left the house by an obscure door that led into the extensive grounds and woods of Warleigh.

CHAP. X.

—— I part with thee
As wretches that are doubtful of hereafter
Part with their lives, unwilling, loth, and fearful,
And trembling at futurity.

Rowe's *Tamerlane*.

Farewell ! God knows when we shall meet again :
I have a faint cold fear thrills through my veins
That almost freezes up the heat of life.

SHAKESPEARE.

RADCLIFFE did not long tarry after the departure of Dame Gee ; but unwilling to leave the house without bidding a last farewell to Gertrude, for whom he felt that tranquil but tender regard an affectionate brother entertains towards an amiable sister, he stole softly to the chamber door of her who had been the companion of his infancy, and the friend of his maturer age.

The low knock he gave was answered by a voice that, in tremulous accents, bade him enter.

If Gertrude was surprised at seeing Radcliffe (prepared as he was for leaving the house at that hour in the evening), with anger and distress imprinted on every feature of his countenance, he was not less so when he observed the extreme agitation and the pallid looks of his dearest friend.

“Amias,” she said, as he entered, with her accustomed warm-hearted simplicity of manner, “do you go forth to-night and leave me, when I am surrounded by so many circumstances of danger and distress? To-night is the meeting of the royalists—you know my fears. You have failed in warning those I could have wished, for their own sakes, to be warned not to come hither.” She paused, sighed, and then added, “Had it been any other than my father who had convened the meeting, I would at any risk, I would—but do not ask me what I would have done, or what I have been driven to do from the stern necessity of these times. I have yet hope; I think I have taken the means, the only means, left me to preserve my uncle and his friend, Sir William Bastard. May Heaven bless

them; for should this last attempt fail, I fear they may be—I will not speak my fears: I can but pray that danger may be averted, for surely my father is moved by some strange passion; I have never seen him before as he has been to-day, in any moments of his anger.”

“And his passion towards me, Gertrude,” said Amias, “has known no bounds. This night I leave his house for ever. You are surprised, but so it is; do not seek to stay me. I will not shock you by repeating what has passed: but I must leave him. I must quit Warleigh, else, Gertrude, I may be tempted to forget—if provocation is again used towards me—that Sir John Copplestone is *your* father; and for your sake, however ill he may have used me, I would spare him, Gertrude; yes, I will spare him, and that when he might least expect me to do so—on the day that shall make me of age. I will not dispute my rights with him, though, provoked by ill usage, I so far forgot myself this night as to threaten I would do so. No matter, the time for action is not yet arrived; then it is I can be generous, even to an enemy. My

guardian has ever been to me stern, severe, and unrelenting: but *you* are his daughter; and your kindness was a balm to my feelings when I had no other friend in the world but yourself to whom to look for comfort. I can, I will forgive the father for the sake of the child. Yet I must leave you; or this resolution may not hold good. Farewell, Gertrude, farewell; my more than friend, my sister—for such you have been to me: may God bless and comfort you: think sometimes of Amias Radcliffe; and when you do so, remember that he is to you the same as ever—grateful and affectionate; think of him as of a brother.”

“I do think of him as of a brother, and a dear brother,” said Gertrude; “and I cannot bear that he should be driven from the house that has sheltered him from infancy. Driven hence, and that by one whose conduct I dare not scan too closely. Oh, Amias, pity me. I would be kind to you; I would beg you to stay for my sake, for your own sake, but that I fear——”

“Fear nothing, at least for me, my dear

Gertrude," said Amias. "There wants not many weeks of my being of age, when I must become my own master; and till then I trust I shall find some friend who will give me so much as shelter, and some means of assistance, that it will soon be in my power to repay honourably, as a gentleman should requite all obligations."

"Good heavens!" exclaimed Gertrude, "are you going from us, then, without the certainty of finding a home to receive you, and penniless? This is too shocking—it must not, it shall not be: let me be your friend; your sister you have called me, let me be such; and as a sister to a brother in his need, I will supply your present necessity; you shall not ask aid of strangers. Here, Amias, take this purse: nay, take it, and do not make me suspect that you really think so little of your friend that you would not be obliged to her for a debt of kindness that affords more satisfaction to her who gives than to him who takes. I am, you know, your sister."

"You are my better angel," said Radcliffe; "I will not refuse your kindness; and most

gratefully shall I hail the hour when, returning this present debt, I may have the occasion to requite it tenfold. Is there any thing I can do for you? I must not tarry longer; your father's anger, I fear, would be turned on you, if he but suspected I had seen you, or received any assistance at your hand."

"You can do nothing unless it be—but I ought not to ask it after what you have told me of the bitter and unfounded jealousies with which my cousin Elford pursues you."

"I heed not his threats," said Radcliffe, "though they have been thrown out even against my life. Tell me what it is you would have of me: I owe all to your kindness; you shall find that I am not ungrateful."

"I would ask," said Gertrude, "that if in your way hence you saw any of the royalist gentlemen, even if it be Reginald Elford himself, that you would warn them not to come to Warleigh this night; for nothing can conquer the prepossession I feel, that to come would be at the peril of their lives."

"I will obey you," said Radcliffe: "the

evening is growing darker and darker every moment: I will warn any royalists I may chance to meet — even Elford himself; since your kinsman is dear to you, though he should resent rather than thank me for my interference. Farewell, Gertrude, may Heaven bless you!”

“And you, dear Amias,” she said, “may we meet in happier and better times hereafter.”

“Amen to that wish, my dear Gertrude,” he replied; “but there is a weight about my heart this night that I can neither account for nor shake off, which makes me doubt if we shall ever meet again on this side time.”

“Do not say so,” said Gertrude; “though you have known many hardships at Warleigh, yet surely it is but natural you should feel some regrets at leaving, and on such unhappy terms, the place of your birth, your early and your only home. Farewell, I will hope you leave us for happier hours.”

“My trust is in God, be the future what it may,” said Radcliffe; “for he is the Father of the fatherless; and to him I commit me, be it for good or evil: his will be done. God bless you.”

Saying this, Radcliffe approached Gertrude, pressed her hand to his lips, and looked on her with tenderness, whilst the tears bedewed his eyes: there was a solemnity in his manner as he took this affectionate leave of his dearest friend that made a deep impression on her feelings and was never to be effaced by any after occurrence of her life. She waved her hand—unable to speak more than the simple words, “God bless you, too, Amias;” which showed how deeply she felt interested in his fate—as if he had really been a brother. In fact, from early habit, and having grown up from infancy together, the regard which subsisted between them was truly deserving the name of fraternal love; it had in it all the tenderness of affection, without the ardour of passion.

On leaving the house Radcliffe pursued his way on foot; for so strict had Copplestone been with his godson, that he could not command even a horse from the stables without his leave, nor was he allowed to keep one that could be called his own. He walked slowly forward,

gliding under the shadow of the tall trees that formed the avenue leading to the great entrance.

As he passed the last tree he saw Copplestone returning swiftly towards the house after having been in pursuit of Coleman. Radcliffe stood close till he was quite sure his guardian was out of sight, and then continued his way, undetermined how to act, or where to go till the morning, when he had some thoughts of setting forward to Exeter, to consult with a person he knew there (who was considered skilful in the law) as to what measures he ought to take on coming of age, to bring his avaricious and unkind guardian to a just and equitable account.

The lateness of the hour, and the lowness of his spirits, prevented Radcliffe from thinking of going far that night. He also recollected Gertrude's last charge to him; and knowing how much the Widow Raleigh, from motives of humanity, had favoured the distressed royalists, it now first occurred to him, that if he hastened on to her, she might have it in her power to be of some use on the present emergency: at all events, he would call and see her, and then de-

termine to act as circumstances might concur to render it advisable to trust her or not at such a moment.

This resolution taken, he set off for Tamer-ton, and soon came within sight of the church that stood, tall and upright, in the dusk of evening, looking dark and gloomy against the sullen and lowering sky, that hung with masses of "pillowy clouds," and seemed to threaten a storm. Even at this hour, and in the midst of the many cares and anxieties that oppressed his heart, Amias could not look on the old church without remembering, that within the churchyard, beneath a stately mausoleum, reposed the ashes of his father. His father! a thousand thoughts rushed into his mind, and swelled his heart, as he dwelt on the remembrance of him who had once borne so dear a name.

In infancy, when he looked in that parent's face, he had witnessed its joy or sorrow too often to forget it, as he sat on his father's knees in Warleigh halls, and experienced that tenderness of affection which had ever marked the

conduct of Sir Walter Radcliffe towards his son. When a child, too, he had seen him shed many and bitter tears for his mother's death, as the widowed father would clasp Amias, the only surviving pledge of her affection, to his bosom. He remembered how often Sir Walter had himself administered to his childish wants, or his childish amusements. He recollected him, also, on his death-bed; and the last cold kiss which pressed on his infant lips had conveyed that chill to his young heart that first made him sensible of pain, and left an impression of undefinable terror, that was never to be forgotten, till he should, likewise, become the tenant of the tomb.

These mingled recollections of tenderness and sorrow prompted a strong desire in the bosom of Radcliffe to visit the churchyard before he left the neighbourhood on so uncertain a date of return. With hasty steps he advanced towards the place where stood the square stone monument that covered the vault in which his father had been buried. He wished no eye to witness the visit he now paid to the spot; for

the feelings of pious regret entertained towards the dead, by those of a delicate mind, are generally of a nature which shuns the eye of common or uninterested observers. They court the loneliness and the silence of sorrow, that loves to commune with the heart and be still.

Such were Radcliffe's feelings; and as he approached the tomb, he looked round to see that no one observed him. He was, however, observed, and that attentively, by a man wrapped in a cloak, who had stolen so cautiously on his steps that he had no suspicion such an intruder was near him, till his eye gave him the first intimation of it.

Radcliffe, on the first glance, fancied there was something in the height and air of the figure that reminded him of Reginald Elford. Could it be Elford? He felt doubtful; and unwilling to commit himself, or to betray Gertrude's warning unnecessarily to a stranger, he walked on towards the Tamerton oak that stood without the churchyard, pondering in his own mind what he ought to do for the best. The figure followed him, as he paused beneath the

oak. What ensued will be told in due place and time; at present we must turn to other matters that demand our more immediate attention.

CHAP. XI.

Oh, what a world is this, when what is comely
Envenoms him that bears it !
I overheard him, and his practices.
This is no place, this house is but a butchery ;
Abhor it, fear it, do not enter it. SHAKESPEARE.

IT was on the afternoon of the twentieth day of June that whilst the poor Widow Raleigh was busied in her usual household affairs, she was surprised by a visit from no less a person than Trim Foretop, the honest barber, who is already known to the reader.

There was in the countenance and demeanour of Trim a more than ordinary expression of importance, not unmingled with a seriousness which seemed, like to a “titled volume,” to tell the news he had to convey was of a nature at once eventful and dismaying. His first action was to close the cottage door that he had found open ; his next to raise hands and eyes, as he looked upon Mistress Raleigh, exclaiming,

“ As you love life, good widow, quit your house this night, or the Lord help you from cucking stool and faggots ! I’ve never paused, nor stopped, nor so much as took breath on the road, till I got here to tell you so.”

“ To tell me what ? ” enquired Mistress Raleigh, exceedingly alarmed at the manner and words of the barber. “ Who would seek to harm so poor, and, I will say it, so inoffensive, a person as I am. Whom have I provoked ? ”

“ The devil, they do say, Mistress Raleigh, to give you up ; but I say it is the devil’s dam rather. Captain Doll, and the town constable, and a guard of troopers, will be here before night. I heard the news in my own shop. All news comes to the barber’s, you know. Before night, as I said, you will be taken up, secured, and lodged in gaol, under the heavy and most terrifying charge of witchcraft.”

“ Of what ? ” exclaimed Mistress Raleigh, justly surprised at hearing so unexpected an accusation : “ this must be some mistake ; the tale is too absurd to be credited ; every body knows that I am the widow of a clergyman ;

my husband was one of the chaplains to King Charles."

"No matter for that, Mistress Raleigh," said Trim; "more likely to come under suspicion. A clergyman's widow may be as easily charged with being a witch as a clergyman with being a wizard: don't you remember how the godly took up, misused, and imprisoned the Reverend Doctor Atwell? Wherefore did they so? because, forsooth, he kept a knowing black cat in his study; made curious notes on the motions of the moon and stars, and cured many of the plague without catching the disorder himself; and so he suffered for being suspected of having done good by the power of evil. I see you look as if you doubted all I say; but for all that, I'll tell whatever I know as quick as may be. Do but give me a cup of cider, for running and fearing are both things that make a man's blood in a fever."

Mistress Raleigh complied with Trim's request, who, after having satisfied his thirst, thus told his story: — "You must have heard, Mistress Raleigh, that these rascally puritan

rebels in parliament, — I speak my mind freely and honestly to you, as I do to all persons whose opinions agree with my own,—sent out one Master Matthew Hopkins, a witch-finder, acting under commission for the parliament, and sent out to search for, harry, smoke, and burn all women, old or young, who have not wit enough left in them to cheat the devil after having done his work. I say, did you ever hear of such a man ?”

“ Hear of him !” exclaimed Mistress Raleigh : “ alas ! I remember but too well a poor old creature, who, on account of extreme age, distress, and poverty, and having lost both her sons in the civil wars, became irritable and cross-grained in her temper, and would sometimes vent her humours on her neighbours. For these crimes she fell a sacrifice to Hopkins ; though many thought the real cause was that she had given offence by harbouring a royalist,—a gentleman who had been most active in the service of the King.”

“ And that’s your offence, Mistress Raleigh, my life upon it,” said Trim. “ Now, mark me.

Dolly Summerfield, her they call Captain Doll, was once engaged with Hopkins and Sterne in the trade of witch-finding, but Dolly soon dissolved partnership; for whilst she hallooed on the hounds, and beat up the bushes for game, Hopkins, who ever came in at the death, generally managed to fatten and batten on the victim, so that Doll had little more than the pleasure of doing mischief for her reward, a requital which, it is said, — no offence Mistress Raleigh, — most women think the sweetest part of payment. Dolly, however, liked something that was more substantial, though one would think she could scarce find it so much to her taste; and so, being dissatisfied with Master Hopkins, she left him, and shortly after, falling in with Captain Butler, she did the devil's work in another line, and turned army preacher in favour of the rebellion."

"And what has all this to do with me?" enquired Mistress Raleigh.

"Why, nothing more," answered Trim, "than that Captain Doll, thinking her old trade may help her new one, and having an

especial spite against you, because you refused to let her take shelter in your cottage the day of Tamerton revels, whereby the boys held good their purpose of making her ride to water, — why, I say, from one and all these things, Dolly Summerfield, or Captain Doll, has entered and sworn a charge of witchcraft against you, Mistress Raleigh; but it is chiefly suspected, so at least was it whispered in my shop, that your main offence is that of having helped to hide, conceal, and abet, more than one noted royalist; and it is shrewdly suspected that the purpose of all this is nothing else than by laying you up in limbo, on such an accusation, and keeping your child apart from you, to terrify and to get you to confess what you know about certain royalists, against whose persons, properties, and devices, the council of state have an especial wrath.”

Mistress Raleigh became exceedingly agitated: she well knew that she *had* assisted many of the distinguished royalist gentlemen in their concealments and escape; and though she would rather die than become a traitor to them,

yet the thoughts of being held a prisoner, of being separated from her child, were almost more than she could bear; yet where to go, or where to seek for shelter and relief, she knew not; and she now anxiously enquired of Trim “what possible shadow of *proof* Dolly Summerfield could adduce in support of her ridiculous charge of witchcraft?”

“Proof!” replied Trim; “proof is not required, nothing but an oath is necessary in such matters, and that I will warrant she will not spare in her charge against you, for her hate seems most deadly and malicious. But she does tell a tale, and has sworn to it, about seeing you enter Tamerton church at night about one o’clock in the morning; that you had a strange figure with you, wrapped in a large cloak, and strongly suspected to be a sister witch; that each of you carried a broomstick, and smelt of sulphur and brimstone. And she farther deposes, that she saw a light burning in the tower of the church where you entered; and that after dancing round an open grave you were soon joined by the evil one himself,

who came to you in the figure of an old man with red horns. You next proceeded to rifle coffins, pick dead mens' teeth out of their skulls, steal winding-sheets, and cut shrouds at a thread, and all for your own cursed magical rites. And this being done, the devil, yourself, and your companion, all at once vanished bodily, old Beelzebub being seated on a flying horse, that sent forth smoke, and brimstone, and flames from his mouth and nostrils, and left a blight and a blast on every tree, shrub, and green thing that was near him. This is only part, and not the worst part, of Captain Doll's deposition sworn to against you. You know how far this statement is true; though I must say, Mistress Raleigh, I don't believe one word about it; and so I came here to warn you; for who knows but what your very life may be in danger? Captain Doll spares nobody against whom she takes a spite."

Mistress Raleigh became exceedingly alarmed; for well did she now remember, that on the night she had guided Gertrude Copplestone to assist poor Sir Marmaduke Elford's escape, when he

was concealed in the church, she had been alarmed by a shadow as of a human figure, which she endeavoured to hope, at the time, might be nothing more than an illusion of her own fancy. She now felt convinced she had been an object of suspicion, and was, therefore, watched for the sake of being betrayed, under the colour of a cruel and sanguinary law.

One of the most striking features in the unrelenting spirit which distinguished the fanatics of the day was a firm conviction—and they acted upon it with rigour—that the laws and precepts of the Israelites, whilst under the direction of Moses, should be followed in all after ages of the world; and that Christianity, so far from superseding the ancient laws of the Jews (in many instances adapted as they were to the climate of the East as well as to the people), was to be held even as secondary to them. Hence arose their puritanical and rigid observance of the Sabbath; their considering that the crimes of idolatry and witchcraft should be visited with death in its most cruel form, even that of burning at the stake.

Matthew Hopkins was a monster of iniquity: his persecution of the poor and miserable for sorcery, under the sanction of the godly in those days of rebellion, has not been forgotten by Butler, who thus records it in *Hudibras*:—

“ Hath not this present parliament,
A leaguer to the devil sent;
Fully empowered to treat about
And find revolted witches out? ”

Hopkins, however, was not the only witchfinder of his day. Another active agent was sent by the righteous commons into the west of England; and some, even of the clergy, obnoxious on account of their loyal principles, were sufferers on the absurd charge of demonology. The last burning that ever took place in England for these crimes (let them have been real or supposed) was at Exeter in Devon, where three poor old women suffered on a charge very much like the deposition made against Mistress Raleigh by the infamous Captain Doll.

Knowing the wicked spirit that was abroad, and that from the circumstance of her having assisted the royalists she stood in danger of

her life, even if she should escape the charge of dealing in forbidden arts, Mistress Raleigh became exceedingly disturbed; and whilst thanking honest Trim for the timely warning he had conveyed to her, she did not hesitate to tell him her fears and her uncertainty as to where she could fly for shelter at such a moment. She had but one faithful friend who *could* help her, and he lived in Plymouth; how could she get there with a hope of safety?

“Not to be thought of, Mistress Raleigh,” said the barber: “you might as well hope to escape unhurt by passing through the burning flame of the faggots, as hope to escape unharmed by going through Plymouth. Think again: are you quite sure you have no friend? no poor cottager, no small farmer, no fellow-wanderer in trouble? Rather than stay here and be trapped, I would counsel you to saddle the ass and take what you can with you, and set your little girl upon the beast before you, and so sally out and take your chance on the moors; for if the worst comes of it, you can but fall among thieves, and that you are sure

to do if you remain here ; and murderers, may be, to boot."

Mistress Raleigh started at hearing the words "*fall among thieves*," and she received the intimation they conveyed as the suggestion of heaven itself to her at this moment.

"Yes," she said, "I do know one honest thief, strange as it may sound in your ears to hear me say so. I have no time to tell you the particulars, though you have merited my fullest confidence. But I do believe the man I have thought upon may be trusted. I was charged to seek him in the hour of my need—surely that hour is come ; and I was further charged to name to no one my place of flight, and to bring no one with me but my poor child. It may be a hazardous attempt ; yet what can I do ? To stay here is certain ruin ; and I have no other place of refuge."

"Seek it by all means," said the honest barber ; "seek it, for there's hope any where in a fire, when you are once out of the house that's burning about your ears. I'll give you what help I can for half an hour ; saddle the ass for you

myself; see all ready, and leave you to set off at dusk, as the safest hour to begin your journey. There'll be a fine moon up to night, as round and as full as a cheese; and God guide you through a good way, and make it a safe one, for your sake, and for the sake of the dear little poppet."

"Thank you for the kind wish, Master Foretop," said Mistress Raleigh, as she commenced her few but necessary preparations for leaving her cottage in so hurried and distressed a manner. Trim gave her all the help he could; and thus ran on as he did so, for he used to say his hands could never work without his tongue helping them; and this he repeated once or twice, as he now tied up two or three bundles into which the widow had hastily crammed whatever she possessed most useful and valuable.

"Well, now, these are odd times," said the barber, "always changing like the fashions of a court beard; and abuses growing up as fast as the hair on a man's chin; that if it be trimmed to-day, sprouts out again to-morrow, and be-

comes stubborn, as I may say, under the very razor. Well, and so these rebels say it's all for religion's sake that they are letting loose the devil among us. For you see, Mistress Raleigh, you may know a work (so indeed says the Scripture) as well as a tree by its fruits; as, in fact, you may know a roundhead by the crop about his ears, and guess sure enough who is *his* master. Very well, then, I say, when you see one having a gift, as the godly call it, of preaching, and who turns it into making the pulpit a place for lies, and takes Holy Writ as a warrant for overturning the church, and makes liberty a licence for doing all that's amiss, and laying the poor king up in a prison, whilst those who break his laws go free, why, I say, when things like these come to pass, it's time for me to sharpen my wits as well as my razors; for no man's safe if he should happen to remember one good old lesson, that in my young days used to be taught to a child as soon as its name, — Fear God, and honour the king."

Mistress Raleigh now made an effort to

check Trim's loquacity, and to hasten her preparations.

"You say well, good widow," he replied, "'t is time to be gone : saddle the ass ; oh yes, I'll saddle him for you immediately. The little girl—oh yes, the pretty little girl—will ride before you like a fairy. You'll see to her, whilst I see to the beast ; and then I'll bid you a good even ; for my staying here can do you no good, and might do myself harm. And be sure, Mistress Raleigh, before you sally out to begin your journey, be sure you first send forth your little Mary to peep about and see that the coast's clear : she's sharp enough to keep a good look out ; and so may God speed you and give you a safe journey."

Trim Foretop having saddled the ass, and Mistress Raleigh having completed all her hasty preparations for leaving her own home, the good-natured barber took his leave ; and the unfortunate widow only waited till the hour of evening, in the hope that the dusk would offer her more security in her retreat than she could expect to find in the broad eye of day.

CHAP. XII.

Though in the trade of war I have slain men,
Yet do I hold it very stuff o' the conscience
To do no contrived murder.

SHAKSPEARE.

DURING the interval Mistress Raleigh felt a degree of courage and composure which enabled her to meet her coming trial with every energy that was necessary to go through with it. If she had an anxiety it was about her child. For herself, though not ignorant of the real dangers by which she was surrounded, yet her sense of divine Providence being always about her path, gave her strength to view them without that degree of fear that incapacitates the mind for action in those very moments when its firmness is most needed, and without which it sinks before the storm.

Her certain cares, therefore, she cast upon God, and for ideal ones, she had them not. She

had good sense, and was of a calm, tranquil nature: but Mistress Raleigh was neither an imaginative nor a nervously sensitive person; consequently she had no terrors of her own creation to surround with their shadowy forms the path of real difficulty that lay before her. So sudden had been this alarm that she had no leisure to arrange any thing like a plan for her future conduct. She had learnt that her life was in danger, — a life, unhappy as it was, prized even by her when she knew how necessary it was to the well-being of her child, since, as with many others who have been greatly unfortunate, suffering had rendered her mind familiar with the thoughts of death; so that for *herself* she did not fear to face it: but to leave her innocent girl without a friend or protector in the world was a thought that made her determine to endure any misery with patience, and still to cling to life as to a thing of the highest worth: so true is it, that long suffering will blunt the terrors of the grave, but seldom renders callous the tender affections of the heart.

Though from the extraordinary conduct of

the robber, who had spared her whilst he rifled Captain Coleman, she could not but entertain a strong hope that he would, indeed, befriend her in her distress, yet her thoughts of him were not unaccompanied with terror and dislike. That she (the widow of Doctor Raleigh, a man of piety and worth,) should be placed in such a situation as to fly for succour to a *thief*, one avowed such, even by his own confession, was a thing not only degrading to her own condition, and repugnant to her best feelings, but even dangerous, since it might render her suspected, and, in some measure, guilty in the eye of the law, by thus seeking and associating with a person liable to its penalties, and falling within its censures even to the most alarming extent.

Yet, what could she do? she must seek this man, or fall into the hands of a fanatical and infuriated enemy. “There is,” said Mistress Raleigh, after having turned over all these points in her own mind,—“there is much truth in the old proverb,—of two evils choose the least. I must now make my election, for there is nothing

else I can do ; and for the rest I must trust to Him, who is pleased to try me, for the safety and deliverance of myself, and of my poor fatherless child. Here, Mary, dearest ; go forth, my darling, and trip down as far as the oak, and look around you very carefully, and see who is about. If there is no one, — and all, now, seems pretty quiet, — we will mount Dobb's back, and set forward, my dear, on our journey. But be sure, Mary, not to tell any one that we are this night going from home. — 'There, kiss me, sweet, and go and do as I bid you.'

The child, though young, was remarkably intelligent ; and having been often used as a messenger to carry, unsuspected from her age, assistance to the royalists, she had learnt a degree of prudence and caution that could scarcely have been expected from one of her tender years.

It was now getting dark ; and though not a breath of air stirred, nor a leaf moved upon the trees, yet the close heated atmosphere, and the dusky red that discoloured rather than gave beauty to the summer evening sky, as well as

every now and then a shock being heard as of distant thunder amongst the hills, all portended a coming storm. This added to the distress of Mistress Raleigh, for she felt particularly anxious to set off on her journey, and to reach the vale of Lidford before midnight. Her anxiety to do so was the greater, because the directions she had received from her unknown friend had been so exceedingly vague and uncertain, that even should she reach the glen in safety, she must trust to fortune, or rather to Providence, for help when she should arrive there.

She felt surprised that little Mary did not return so quickly as she expected; and had some thoughts at last (so much were her fears excited) of running the risk to go out herself and look for the child. She delayed her purpose for a few minutes, in consequence of recollecting that possibly, from the shrewd sense of the girl, if she had seen any one about, she might be induced to linger for a few minutes to watch their movements, or to avoid any suspicion of her being on the look out by making a too hasty retreat to her mother.

The little girl, however, still delayed ; and just as Mistress Raleigh's fears had so far overcome all else that she was determined to seek her daughter at any risk, she was prevented by an alarm the most distressing to the feelings of such a mother. The child rushed at once into the cottage, pale, breathless, trembling in every slender joint, and, as she held out something in her hand that she had brought home with her, exclaimed, " Oh, mother, I have seen it," and dropped down senseless at her parent's feet.

Mistress Raleigh, with that ready and collected energy, that presence of mind which never deserted her, now used every means to restore her child to sense and animation. She succeeded ; and as soon as the sobbing, trembling, and still alarmed little creature could tell her tale, she repeated, in a few words, a circumstance so terrific, to which it had pleased God to make her a witness, that on hearing it the miserable mother became almost as lost as the child had been but a few minutes before. Her maternal feelings, however, instantly caught the alarm ; and, convinced from what she had just

heard that her *child's life* would now, very possibly, be in greater danger than her own, she lost not an instant in preparing for her departure.

She secured her small package of necessaries on the ass, placed her child upon the saddle, and taking the bridle in her own hand determined herself to walk by the side of the beast as far as she could, lest the animal should become tired by a double burden, and so refuse to continue its journey; and more than ever did Mistress Raleigh feel the necessity of removing her child from the spot. She prayed mentally for God's blessing and support in this most distressing hour, as, leading forward the ass, and every now and then whispering a word of comfort or bestowing a kiss upon her poor girl, she set on towards the glen of Lidford, under circumstances of such peculiar and overwhelming doubt, fear, and distress, as had never before, excepting in her husband's death, been her portion in this world, though she had lost all that was nearest and dearest to her during the civil wars. Nothing was now left to her

saving the child of her bosom, and the God of her worship, who had promised (and his word never fails) to defend the cause of the widow and the fatherless committed to his care: even at this moment she felt a strong assurance in that promise, and she was comforted.

In less than an hour after Mistress Raleigh's departure the evening became exceedingly dark; for the sun having long since set, and the moon not yet being risen, thick and dense masses of clouds were so collected together that they formed one huge black mass, shrouding the sky like a mourning mantle, and rendering twilight nearly as melancholy as night itself, when it comes unattended by planetary splendour, and has nothing to keep it company but silence, darkness, and fear. Whilst the obscurity of the hour had rendered a summer's evening in June thus dreary, a light was seen to advance not far from Tamerton church, and to be coming along the pathway that led directly to the door of the cottage from which Mistress Raleigh had so lately fled.

The little party (for it was but a small num-

ber of persons, to guide whom the foremost, who acted as leader, carried a lantern,) advanced with some caution : it consisted of the town constable of Plymouth, Captain Coleman, of noted celebrity, two or three troopers, and the no less famous Captain Doll, who, having sworn to the deposition against Mistress Raleigh as a witch, had proved herself to be no conjuror, since, in chattering about her own intentions to head the arrest to be made under the justice's warrant in the hands of the constable, she had afforded the gossips an opportunity of repeating the whole affair in the barber's shop ; and we have seen how Trim Foretop employed the information thus timely gained to save the poor widow from certain destruction.

As they now advanced, Captain Doll, it appeared, did not carry on her measures with that degree of silence and caution which Captain Coleman seemed to think prudent, if not absolutely necessary ; for swearing a good round oath, in terms not over courteous, he asked if she could not hold her tongue for ten minutes till the business was done.

“Hold my tongue for ten minutes!” exclaimed Captain Doll, as she set her arms a-kimbo, and paused a moment, exceedingly offended by the oath and the expressions which her volubility had provoked from the endurance of the patient Captain Coleman. “I’ll not hold my tongue for ten seconds, let alone minutes, when there is so much cause to lift up my cry in the wilderness, and to testify against such scoffers, and swearers, and scorers, and red-nosed disorderly walkers as *you* are in the land.”

“That’s right,” said Captain Coleman, treating with high contempt the abuse of Captain Doll; for though on the whole they were excellent friends, yet there were moments when drink, petulance, or a more than ordinary pouring-out of the spirit of fanaticism set them quarrelling, as on the present occasion. “That’s right, rant and scold away to your heart’s content; a woman’s tongue makes no wounds that can be seen, and a brave man only laughs at them. Dolly Summerfield, I forgive you, for your lips and the aqua-vitæ bottle have kissed

each other much too often this evening; the brain has got warm as the flagon got cool."

"You are drunk yourself to say so, you godless, saucy jack, you," exclaimed the military virago: "woe unto them that follow strong drink, and continue with wine until night to inflame them. Yea, woe, says Solomon, and woe, say I, for drink makes the heart send out crooked things. I know you, Captain Coleman; for, as the prophet says, your very image is an ale post; for if men do but seek you at home, where are you to be found? not there, but at the Red Dragon, I trow. Where's your sense? where's your wit? Drowned at the Red Dragon. Where's your money? Marry, in the dragon's claws. Where's your temper? Truly in the dragon's blood. And where will be your soul, as the end of all these things? Why, of a verity, in the bottomless pit, where the red dragon himself lies in flames, with all witches, idolaters, and——"

"And lying jades such as you," said Coleman, in great wrath.

"Truly," snuffled the constable, who was a

high Calvinist, and had a most oratorical twang in the nose,—“truly, it becomes not the elect to quarrel among themselves, but rather to make war on Gibeon together: we are here in search of the abomination of desolation, as I may say; for what is more abominable than a witch? or should be more desolate than her dwelling? We should raise hand and voice in sweet harmony together, to put her out of the land.”

“I do raise my voice,” cried Dolly, “and will take up my song, and it shall be a song of cursing even from morning until night; and I will keep it up even when the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fail: for a witch is a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer.”

“Or an old woman on a broomstick,” cried Coleman, “who flies through the air like a lap-wing, if all that’s spoken be true; and you are like enough to give her warning to be off, for here we are, hard by the oak tree, and if you will keep up this bawling—why, now do hold your tongue.”

“ I will not hold my tongue,” cried Doll, “ when it is as a trumpet against iniquity : as well might you attempt to stop the cry of blood when it cries out from the very earth.”

“ Hey ! what have we here ?” exclaimed Coleman, as his foot stumbled against something. “ Here, Tom, constable, man ; turn hither thy lantern, and let us see what lies under the oak, — a man, I think, dead or drunk ; or, may be, both—dead-drunk. Why, up, friend ; up, I say : canst not answer ? Nay, then I must question you with my halbert. But first let’s look at thy face—canst not speak for thyself ?”

A deep groan was heard at this moment. “ God of mercy !” cried the constable ; “ *that* speaks, and a terrible word — look ! the man hath a wound in his back. Some coward hand dealt that blow : he is murdered !”

“ Help me to raise his head,” said Coleman ; “ hold the light to his face—surely I should know him. It is,—yes, surely, God of heaven, —it is Master Amias Radcliffe ! Here, help, run, fly to the nearest cottage ; bring aid, call up all

you meet. This is a gentleman, and one who is much valued by those high in power."

"Undo his doublet—cut his band strings; I will tear up my gown to staunch the blood. Oh that I had but a bottle of *rosa solis*. Can you speak, sir?" continued Dolly, who really felt something like pity for a fellow-creature in such a state. "Can you but say who did it? Speak."

"Speak!" cried Coleman; "no, never will he speak again in this world; he is bleeding to death: there is not half an hour's life in him. There is a stab in the chest, too; look, he presses his hand upon his breast: who did it? Speak the word, Master Amias; say who brought you to this pass, if you can speak;" and swearing a tremendous oath, he added, "if the murderer walks the earth in the shape of man, I swear he shall account for it with the last drop of blood that fills his veins. Who struck you?"

It seemed as if the unfortunate Amias Radcliffe, though speechless and expiring, yet, nevertheless, understood what was said to him. Propped up in the arms of Coleman—as Dolly Summerfield endeavoured to staunch the blood

that issued fast from his chest, and the constable held the light to her that she might see to do it — Radcliffe looked up earnestly, and fixed his eyes on Coleman. They were filled with water : his lips moved, but no voice came. His features were sunk, and the muscles about the face twitched convulsively ; every feature wore the marble hues of death.

After vainly essaying to speak, the unfortunate young man made one last effort : it was probably to recommend his soul to God ; for, pressing his hands feebly together, his eyes became raised, and the lips were slightly in motion. In a few moments he seemed to be lost to all around him : his hands dropped heavy and motionless by his side — the dreadful death-rattle was in his throat, a slight groan announced the parting pang, and he fell backwards on the earth, his eyes open, but fixed and glaring, with all that terrific and repulsive expression which the human eye invariably possesses when its light is quenched in death, and it is no longer as the glass to reflect those beautiful changes of feeling and of thought that raise the human creature

above every other created thing, and show forth his immortality in the grandeur of his moral energies, and in the power of his moral actions. No part of the body decays so quickly as the eye, because it is the immediate organ of the soul: the soul is to it as the sun to the earth; its beams give it light and lustre, and when that is set it falls at once into darkness and to night.

Thus died, in a manner as mysterious as it was dreadful, Amias Radcliffe — a young man though guided by mistaken notions of public spirit into many acts of disloyalty, yet who, nevertheless, possessed a mind that was the very temple of truth and honour, and a heart full of the most kind, affectionate, and generous feelings. Yet thus he died: God permitted him to fall by so fearful an end; nor must we attempt to scan his providence, awful as it always is, and often beyond our conceptions, for man hath none equal to the ways of God.

There is no lesson like death: even the infamous woman and her hardened associates, who now witnessed the last moments of Radcliffe, were moved by them. They stood for some

moments in silence looking upon the dead : a fearful example was, indeed, before them, to alarm and awaken conscience ; for if the sight of a sudden and violent death cannot do it, nothing will ; and the sinner so warned, if that warning be vain, generally falls into worse courses, and becomes a reprobate.

It is nature's law that man is appointed once to die, yet the world never fails. Man in his generation frets himself in vain : he is like the restless and tiny waves as they beat against the shore ; but their impotent agitation no more affects the body of the mighty ocean, than the death and sorrows of one man affects mankind at large ; since the living succeed the dead as regularly as the day follows on the night.

Some thoughts of this description probably passed through the mind even of such a woman as Captain Doll, at this awful moment ; for, accustomed as she was to preaching, and familiar with her Bible amongst the godly, she now repeated the beautiful verse from Jeremiah, —“ The stork in the heavens knows her appointed times, and the turtle, and the crane, and

the swallows, observe the time of their coming ; but man knoweth not the judgments of the Lord."

Coleman and the constable raised the body, and, assisted by some persons they had called to their aid, prepared to carry it to Warleigh.

CHAP. XIII.

Till now you have gone on, and fill'd the time
With all licentious measure, making your wills
The scope of justice ; till now, myself, and such
As slept within the shadow of your power,
Have wander'd with our traversed arms, and breathed
Our sufferance vainly. SHAKSPEARE.

WE must now return to Gertrude, who, after Amias Radcliffe had bid her farewell, remained in her own chamber in a state of mind that it would be difficult to conceive or to describe, so mixed, so varied, so intense were her feelings ; yet all of them partaking of alarm, and but faintly mitigated by any certainty in her expectations to raise or to confirm her hopes. Yet she did hope ; and internally prayed the God of mercy that he would that night rescue the poor sufferers who, she had so much cause to believe, were destined to become the victims of treachery in Warleigh's halls.

It was now evening ; she sat reclining at an

open window in her chamber listening attentively to every sound, and watching the least movement without the house. Her room looked towards the river; and though the landscape was shadowed and intercepted by the thick foliage of the massive and lofty trees that skirted its banks, yet, nevertheless, she caught a view, between their openings, of the surrounding prospect, composed as it was of the broad and silvered waters, and hills in the distance, melting, as it were, into the sky as they became obscured and mellowed by the grey and sober evening tints.

The sun was setting on the distant waters; and where they expanded themselves, so as to resemble a lake in magnitude, might be seen along their level a glow of amber light, beautifully contrasted by the clear and dark outline of a vessel that was anchoring close within shore. How tranquil and beautiful was the scene! As Gertrude looked upon it from the window various small boats glided lightly along the surface of the waters: the measured stroke of their oars broke but for a minute the deep

silence which reigned around as they seemed to steal upon the view, and as quickly to disappear beyond the opening in the woods, through which she contemplated the scene. Sweet were the sounds of the rippling waves, sweet the gentle stir of the breeze as it sighed along the avenue of old trees that skirted the house ; now rising, now falling in melancholy cadence, that seemed to the mind of Gertrude, filled as it was with melancholy images, as a lament for the departing day, bringing it to its close with dirge-like melody.

As the anxious daughter of Copplestone thus sat watching in her apartments, she heard the distant trampling of horses ; and soon after several persons, who, it appeared, approached the house with much caution, dismounted and entered the hall in silence. Their numbers gradually increased, till there might be present, in all, about ten gentlemen. Sir John Copplestone advanced to receive them. There was a stillness about the meeting, a solemnity in the manner of all present, that seemed to tell the purpose which thus caused these gentlemen to

assemble together with so much caution was one of high and stern import.

In the more retired and obscured parts of the hall every object was indistinct and sombre; whilst a partial light from the departing sun streamed through the windows, and its rays darted on the group of figures now seated round the long oak table in the midst. Large apartments, whose proportions and architecture are of the Gothic ages, create awe when viewed at the twilight hour : their height, the blackened beams and overhanging arches of their carved ceilings, the mausoleum heaviness and gloom of their vast chimneys (when no faggot is blazing to give light and life to the empty space), the tall shafted windows with their massive mullions, and the strong and broad character of the shadows that hang about the old walls, all contribute to produce that solemn and pensive feeling which vastness, antiquity, and the fading light of day never fail to create in minds not insensible to the witching power of imagination, and the pictures she calls up at such a time so vividly before her view.

The strong and partial illumination, such as we have described, which sent its glowing light through the windows of Warleigh halls, showed distinctly the features of all who were present. There might be seen the noble and frank expression, not unblended with some degree of haughtiness, that distinguished the countenance of Sir Piers Edgcumbe, for he was of the assembly.

There, also, was seen, rendered more striking by the shadows of the hour, the bold, open, and confident brow of Trelawny of Trelawn, in whose veins ran the blood of heroes who had not spared it in the fields of Poitiers and of Cressy ; and whose family boasted, with a pride that built itself on honour, of being one of the first who in Cornwall had risen to chase from his usurped throne that cruel tyrant, the third Richard.

Colonel Tremaine, too, was present, who, though he had been forced to surrender in the late contest his noble family mansion of Sydenham, after it had held out a long and perilous siege, nevertheless still displayed, with unabated

vivacity, the quick determination, the unquestionable authority, the calm courage, and the high courtesy which had ever rendered him deservedly popular as a military officer and a royalist formed to lead, in the most dangerous times, wherever honour and duty pointed the way.

Another person was also there, whose arrival, when it reached the ear of Gertrude, made her heart sink within her, since she was convinced by it that her messenger had not been able to deliver her letter; in short, that the warning had altogether failed. This person was no other than Sir William Bastard, so often mentioned as the peculiar object of Gertrude's more than esteem, and of her father's detestation. The manly beauty of Sir William's countenance was peculiarly prepossessing: it was expressive of high resolution and courage united to the utmost sweetness of disposition. He entertained a marked abhorrence to every species of hypocrisy; whilst his stern reproof of injustice, his vehement and passionate character (generous even in its very failings), all

rendered him a gentleman, young as he was, that every where took his place amongst those who lead, and not amongst those who follow. Authority seemed, indeed, so natural to him, that his was generally admitted without dispute. He had been one of the foremost to support the King's cause in the west, and had assisted the valiant old John Arundel in holding out Pendennis Castle (the very last fortress in the kingdom which surrendered to Cromwell), even after the unfortunate Charles had counselled his followers to lay down their arms, and dismiss their garrisons, at the time he was betrayed by the Scots.

There was, too, in the midst of all the energetic and fiery expression that characterised the countenance of Sir William Bastard, a certain gentleness and good humour which spoke a kind and even flexible disposition, in all cases where his high principles of loyalty did not interfere to raise the stormy susceptibility of his soul. Sir William's complexion was that of health ; and, seen in combination with his fine dark eyes, and long locks of rich chestnut hair,

that hung curling over his shoulders, his head appeared altogether such as a painter would have chosen for the young Apollo, and one that no eye could behold without a feeling of involuntary admiration. His portrait is still preserved at Warleigh; and seems to speak, even at this distance of time, the man born to command, and not to be forgotten in his country's history.

Other gentlemen there were present, but none of so much note as those above named; nevertheless all were picked men, if we may use the expression, remarkable for zeal, loyalty, honour, and courage in the cause of the King: not a man amongst them but would have thought his own life a small sacrifice to procure the liberty and safety of his sovereign.

As Sir John Copplestone came forward to receive these gentlemen, he looked as if labouring under some internal and ill-suppressed anxiety, possibly arising from his conscience, practised as he was in blunting its edge; yet there were moments when it whispered to him, in a voice that would be heard, and that told him, as he

encountered Sir William Bastard, how deadly a sin was the enmity he harboured against him. Be this as it may, no whisperings of conscience could be powerful enough to shake his purpose when it once became resolved.

The naturally stern expression of his swarthy countenance was unabated, yet every muscle was composed : he bowed and saluted, with grave courtesy, each royalist, as his keen, quick, and dark eye shot on each a glance that was at once steady and penetrating—a glance that seemed as if it would read the inmost thought. This done, his eyes settled on the ground ; and if there was any thing of agitation about Sir John Copplestone he must be a nice observer who detected it, as in no word, in no action, could it be remarked, excepting, indeed, that once or twice he moved towards the hall door, without any apparent purpose, as if he had for a moment forgotten himself, and then suddenly returned towards the table ; or that a slight trembling of the hand, and having once or twice not immediately heard or understood what was said to him, might proclaim that his feelings,

whatever they were, had some touch in them of anxiety.

Lights were now brought into the hall ; and Copplestone ordered wine and refreshments for his guests. We pass in silence the courtesy with which he entertained them. More than an hour had elapsed when the low, anxious, and whispering tone with which the gentlemen had conversed together became louder, and the conversation more general than it had hitherto been. All spoke of their long cherished plans, their high hopes, their daring aims ; and all expressed an intense anxiety that, by Captain Burley's means, the King should escape from the Isle of Wight ; and possibly (if he really had done so, God being to him as a shield of safety,) he might, even yet, on that very night, receive the homage of those few of his faithful subjects (who were willing to die for him) in Warleigh's ancient halls.

“ Is there no news from Burley ? ” enquired Tremaine. “ I thought that it was by his own desire that we should on the twentieth day of June (having previously made all necessary

arrangements to call out our followers at a moment's warning) assemble at Warleigh, when he promised, if alive, that he would meet us, and he hoped to bring with him the King, to effect whose liberty from Carisbrook Castle a plan was laid, such as Burley thought could not fail, unless there was treachery, and *that* he did not fear, after all that had been done and sworn to by the persons engaged in the plot. Is there no news arrived yet ? ”

“ None,” said Copplestone ; “ but the hour is not yet come, though it draws nigh to it. The night will not pass, I hope, without the accomplishment of our purpose ; but we must be patient, gentlemen. I have sent one to look out and give notice of the approach of the retinue ; for Burley agreed to stop at a spot named on this side Plymouth, where certain gentlemen had promised to meet the royal fugitive, and to guard him in safety to this house as his present home. I wonder the varlet I have sent out to watch brings me no news : but truly I will send out again ; and yet seven times, as Elijah did to look for rain, when there was nothing seen but

a little cloud, small as a man's hand in the distance, yet truly it grew into a great mercy ; even so, I trust, will our present hope. I will send out another scout : it is strange he tarries thus."

" This delay of Burley's is strange, indeed," said Sir William Bastard : " I trust there is no mistake, no misunderstanding ; and, I will say it, no treachery. I saw Burley's letter myself : he stated that he had found means to communicate his plan to the unhappy king, who expressed himself overjoyed, and ready to run any risk to gain liberty. Fear, therefore, on the part of his majesty, cannot be the cause of this delay."

" His majesty," said Sir Piers Edgcumbe, " was never known to be fearful, excepting in trusting to his own counsels ; and better for himself and for the kingdom would it have been had he done so ; since his own opinions were generally wiser than those of his counsellors, if we except Lord Falkland and Master Hyde. The King is not of a fearful temper : fear, indeed, is a tyrannous ruler that should ever be the subject and not the master of kings. Cæsar

gave a noble example of the contempt in which he held it; since he rather chose to expose his life to the assassin's blow, than, by seeking to shun it, at the price of perpetual caution, to allow himself to become harassed by fears. I trust the King will come to-night in safety; or, if not, that Burley will give some good account as to the cause of this delay, that we may know how to act in regard to our followers."

"But there are more friends expected than those of Burley's party," said Trelawny of Trelawn. "I thought, Sir Piers, you assured us that your honest friend, Sir Hugh Piper, would be here? and that Reginald Elford had promised that his father, Sir Marinaduke, should also come, if alive, and be ready to lead forth the yeomanry of his own estate, who would joyfully rise at the bidding of their old master, and would die for an Elford, as well as for the King? How is it that these gentlemen are not present?"

"I cannot tell," replied Sir Piers: "indeed I am lost in conjecture when I think of it; unless it be that they will join Burley on the road

hither, and so all come together. Possibly it may be so; for, you know, Sir Hugh Piper went to Salisbury expressly to forward the plan and to arrange the different stations, so as to have all in readiness to facilitate the escape. And Sir Hugh promised he would return in time to be here this night; yet neither he nor Sir Marmaduke are come."

"It is strange, indeed, that Sir John Copplestone should have no news from any one," said Colonel Tremaine; and he looked exceedingly grave as he made the observation.

"Or possibly none that he chooses to communicate to us," said Sir William Bastard, as he fixed his eye on Copplestone with a look of mistrust. Sir John did not notice it; for at this moment the trampling of horse was heard in the distance; and as the sounds drew nigh the earth seemed to shake under their hoofs with the heavy and measured pace of animals accustomed to advance in military order.

A trumpet sent its loud summons over hill, wood, and river, and every echo repeated the sound, as truly as the sentinel who takes up and

repeats the cry of any sudden alarm, when all rush to arms. It was even so now ; for no sooner did the bray of the trumpet ring throughout the woods than the gentlemen (alarmed by the sudden fear of treachery that passed from each to each, like an electric shock,) drew their swords, and sternly demanded of Copplestone, “ what this might be ? ”

Sir John gave no answer, but rushed to the hall-door : Gertrude, also, had been startled by the sound of the trumpet and the trampling of horse. She had rushed to the window ; and thence she perceived, winding through the avenue, a small troop of cavalry. Though the twilight was too faint to show the armed men thus mounted on their caparisoned and managed steeds with all that imposing effect which in the broad light of day their order, their uniformity, their flashing armour, their glancing swords, and their military array, never fails to excite in the spectacle afforded by the march of horse soldiery, yet, even through the dusk, something of their formidable character might be discovered, as, in double files, they drew up

before the house, and received the command to *Halt*, given in a low but harsh voice by him who led them forward.

This was followed by a whispering, in tones too indistinct to reach Gertrude's ear; but as the files wheeled round she fancied she heard the order given to place a guard at every entrance and avenue that gave access to the house.

"He is lost!" exclaimed Gertrude, as she sunk down on a chair, after having watched so long to find but this completion of her fears. "Sir William Bastard is lost! May Heaven have mercy, for earthly hope there is none; yet I will hear what passes: into the hall I must not go — but the gallery! yes, the gallery, I can glide into that from my own chamber unperceived by any one. I will stand back, out of sight: the obscurity of the hour will favour my purpose. I will endeavour to arm myself with courage, to hear, to bear all in silence and with patience."

This resolution taken, Gertrude prepared herself to steal into the gallery, which partly consisted of a wide platform, or landing-place,

at the head of the great stairs : it overlooked the hall ; and there the minstrels were wont to take their places at any time of festivity. The body of cavalry that had arrived at Warleigh were all picked men, chosen for the present service on account of their fanatical zeal, their sour schismatical spirit, and the most deadly hatred to the King and the royalists. Their number was but small, because it was deemed a measure of prudence not to excite any alarm in the neighbourhood by marching a large body of troops towards Tadmerton on that evening ; and small though they might be, yet were they more than sufficient to master the cavaliers they came to secure as prisoners, taken in holding a meeting treasonable to the parliament and council of state. Such was the event, and such the mean, hypocritical, and Judas-like part Sir John Copplestone had played to draw the royalists into the snares laid for them under his own roof.

CHAP. XIV.

Thou think'st I fear thee, cursed reptile ;
And hast a pleasure in the damned thought.
Though my heart's blood should curdle at thy sight,
I'll stay and face thee still. JOANNA BAILLIE.

THE party was headed by Colonel Holborn, a man who served the parliament with a zeal that has immortalised him in the county of Devon ; where not a house was beleaguered and taken by storm, nor any great act achieved against the royalists, but he could boast of having had some share in the exploit.

Colonel Holborn was tall in stature, of a hardened and saturnine countenance, such as a prisoner would have shuddered to meet in one destined to be his judge : it was no index of mercy. In his dress and manner he had the appearance of a military man. Over his buff coat and steel breastplate he wore a dark coloured cloak that, in moments of deliberation, it was his custom to draw round before him ; and

wrapping his arms in its folds he would stand, sentencing for life or death, with as much careless ease as if he were ordering a parade, or examining the muster-roll of his troop.

Yet Colonel Holborn was upheld by the godly as one of the most righteous men of his day : if zeal in his professions could constitute the claim, he might be such, indeed ; for he was one of those Independents who would have tolerated the rule of Satan in his own person, rather than that of a bishop of the established church, or an elder of the presbytery. Both were equally abhorrent to him ; and devoutly believing, as he did, that the reign of the saints was already commenced upon earth, and that he was himself one of that body, he determined never to hold back till the work he considered them as appointed to do should be fulfilled ; and the ruthless manner in which he pursued his career throughout the civil wars, with his contempt of life when exposed to danger, sufficiently proved he was in earnest, when he declared that heaven must be fought for before it could be won, with the carnal weapons of

matchlock and sword. The practice of shedding blood after victory, in which he had much indulged, had so hardened his feelings, that mercy had no place in them: he was, therefore, a chosen man on all occasions where a resolute will and a hard heart were necessary to consummate an act of injustice.

Colonel Holborn entered the hall of Warleigh in a slow and deliberate manner: his heavy boots sounded at every step as if he would make the very ground feel his authority. In his stern and gloomy eye there was no expression either of fear, anger, or feeling. He could look those he would destroy full in the face, without so much as turning aside his eyes even for a moment; a sure sign of a hardened and indelicate mind, that has no sympathy for the feelings of sorrow or of shame, that must, more or less, be the portion of the unhappy sufferers.

The royalists, on the first alarm being given, had started from their seats in astonishment, for they had not immediately suspected they were betrayed: but the moment they saw Colonel Hol-

born they knew what must be their fate ; all their doubts vanished ; they were certainly ensnared. The most impassioned feelings of indignation possessed every bosom, as they drew and attempted a resistance that had in it the fury of despair. The struggle was brief and ineffectual. Colonel Holborn gave the word, and they were instantly overpowered by the troopers, who had rushed into the hall. One soldier, however, was slain in the scuffle by Sir William Bastard ; and whilst at the last gasp he declared to that gentleman, “ that Sir John Copplestone had set him on to despatch him (Sir William) during the confusion of the assault.”

Copplestone did not hear the dying man’s confession, and still eager for the death of his long-detested enemy, he now exclaimed, “ Blood has been shed by the wicked ; let it not cry from the earth in vain ; blood must have blood ; it is Scripture.”

“ Villain,” exclaimed Sir William Bastard, who saw in a moment that the death of this man (though killed by him but in self-defence,

for the trooper had aimed a blow to strike him down,) was to be seized upon as an excuse to destroy him,—“villain, you have betrayed us all ! and now would you consummate the act with murder ! Take my life ; it is not worth asking, if to save it I must sue to thee for mercy.”

“Where is the noble Burley?” said Sir Piers Edgcumbe ; who, even in these dreadful moments, thought more of the King’s safety than of his own : “where is he?”

“In prison,” replied Copplestone : “the fool’s fate is his ; he spread a net for others, and has fallen into it himself. The King is still a prisoner.”

An expression of the most poignant regret burst from the royalists as Colonel Holborn, with the sanctified cant that was for ever on his lips, exclaimed, “He is reserved, may be, as a sin offering for the iniquities of the land ; seeing that he has been the first to lead on the war and to commit folly in Israel.”

“And is this the end of all our hopes?” said Sir Piers ; “to see them thus wither in our sight?”

We sought your house, Sir John Copplestone, in good faith, but by your own hearth-stone have you betrayed us ; and the noble-minded Burley, by your betrayal, will, I fear, meet a cruel fate.” *

“ He shall be avenged,” cried Sir William Bastard. “ God looks on ; he witnesses this infamy : tremble, villain, for justice cannot, will not, fail to reach thee.”

“ Men without arms kill only with the tongue,” said Copplestone : “ I leave thee to one who has full power to deal with traitors and man-slayers like thyself.”

“ Gentlemen,” said Colonel Holborn, who now turned to address the captive royalists, “ I am not here without warrant. Power has been placed in my hands by those who are now the rulers in this kingdom. To me have they deputed it in Devon ; even as power was put into the hands of Joseph by Pharaoh when he be-

* Captain Burley of Devonshire, whose attempt to liberate King Charles from Carisbrook Castle was so shamefully betrayed, met with a cruel fate indeed. He was thrown into prison, tried for *high treason*, and hanged ! his sole offence being this attempt for the King.

came a mighty man in all Egypt; and even as Joseph dealt with his unhappy and sinful brethren, so would I deal with you, would you but let me; not requiting your sins with shame, but rather covering you with mercy, if you but return into the right way. I pray you, think of this; and as I sit here" (he placed himself at the head of the table, and drew out from under his cloak certain papers as he spoke,) "I would beseech you to answer me truly, as honest men should do, to all such questions as I shall propose to you; and fear nothing, for mercy is to be found would you but seek it."

He turned to Sir Piers Edgcumbe.—"I begin with you: it is well known that this plot, once more to bring in tyranny and to stir up strife in the land, is not confined to Devon. The Cornish men take part in it, and their plans and measures are well known to you; name but the leading men engaged in such an enterprise in Cornwall, or elsewhere, and life and freedom are your reward. Name but these men who are thus devoted to the service of Charles Stuart."

"All that have honest fathers," replied Sir

Piers ; “all that respect truth and justice, and all who fear God and honour the King, more than they fear death, or honour prosperity in rebels. You have my answer.”

“Must I look for no other?” said Colonel Holborn.

“For none,” said Sir Piers ; “should you look till your eyes tire, or till the sun shines out bright enough to show an honest roundhead.”

“Your speech is spoken in scorn,” replied Colonel Holborn ; “but your king has long sat in the seat of the scornful, and you are of his court.”

“And now am I of his captivity,” said Sir Piers ; “I am glad that I am found worthy to share it for his sake.”

“Colonel Tremaine,” said Colonel Holborn, “I hope to find you wiser than your friend here in bondage. You are a military man, and should know something of discipline. What arms and what men have the Cornish insurgents prepared for this rising?”

“Arms such as the cause demands, and some thousand honest hands to wield them : any arms

will now be turned to account ; though they should be no better than pitchforks and ploughshares, they will help to hew down rebels. Some arms there may be that came hither from abroad ; as do gentle gales, when the wind blows too hotly at home for an English constitution."

"Arms sent, no doubt, from Holland," said Colonel Holborn ; "by that papistical queen, Henrietta Maria, the Jezebel of these times, against whom there is gone forth a curse. And *you*," continued the Colonel, addressing Trelawny of Trelawn, "you should know something of these Cornish men?"

"I do," cried Trelawny ; "noble and brave they are : they have stood by a Trelawny in many a hard fought field, and will avenge him, as you may find to your cost, when our Cornish yeomen shall hear of this day's treachery."

"And you, Sir William Bastard," said Colonel Holborn, "you, who are a traitor, who have this day broken the law of God and of the land, you who have taken the life of man whilst engaged in an act of duty, what have

you to say to mitigate punishment, and to turn aside wrath due to your offence?"

"I have committed none," replied Sir William. "Sir John Copplestone, well do I know it, thirsts for my blood in the wantonness of an implacable revenge. If to save my life I must sue to him for mercy, I would not spend as much breath as might be necessary to say the word, though it were sure to gain it; so much do I loath the grey-headed hypocrite, grown old in iniquity and not in honour, who could thus betray me and my gallant friends. Nor do I admit that he or you have any lawful power to deal with me. I came hither to do service to the King,—to whom I am sworn in allegiance,—he is still King of England, though now in cruel bonds; I would ask, how then I can be held as a traitor? There is no law to sanction such an act, and I will acknowledge no power but such as may be founded on law, or on the authority of my prince."

"The parliament have established a law," said Colonel Holborn, "by which it is made

high treason, in any way, to abet the King without its sanction."

"Oh, most iniquitous are all the acts of that rebel commons," said Sir William: "their men and their measures are alike, for both are leagued with falsehood and rebellion; and we are in the power of a villain who never spared life at the call of mercy or of truth."

"It is justice now demands thine," said Sir John Coplestone: "thou wilt find but the reward of thine own misdeeds."

"Talk not of my misdeeds," said Sir William Bastard. "You have dared do wrong; dare then to avow the motive. I know thy enmity, Coplestone, and know its cause. I exposed thy villany, and the frauds thou didst attempt to commit even against thy own wicked masters. You thirst for my blood in requital; my crime is your enmity. But look at home, search thy own heart, and there learn to know thyself; and that if thou hadst meted out to thee the measure of thy own deserts, the recompense would be such as befits a traitor and a murderer."

A deathlike paleness overspread the cheek of

Copplestone: he trembled in every joint of his body, so much did these words shake his inmost soul. His eyes glared on Sir William Bastard with an expression of fury that arose from almost more than human malice. His brows became knit, his mouth compressed, and the upper lip slightly curled, as he said in a low, bitter tone of scorn, "I answer thee not; Colonel Holborn will deal with thee: thou fool in speech and passion, take thy fate, since thou wilt provoke it."

"Captain Butler," said Colonel Holborn, for that worthy had by this time entered the hall,—“Captain Butler, a word in your ear.”

The Captain advanced and listened, bowed, and left the hall. "Sir William Bastard," continued the commander, addressing the prisoner, "did you never hear of the fate of Sir Charles Lucas and Sir George Lisle?"

"They were murdered after the taking of Colchester by the rebels," replied Sir William Bastard: "I remember it well."

"They were shot to death on the instant," said Colonel Holborn; "condemned on the

double charge of being taken in arms, and as insolent and contumacious to the parliament general, by whom they were made captive. Prepare for death, Sir William, for you have incurred the same fate. We give you one hour for preparation. In mercy we grant that, since we would not kill both soul and body for thy crimes. Corporal Hannibal Gammon, conduct Sir William Bastard to the old chapel of this house; there leave him to God and his own thoughts. In an hour see all be ready for his death. May he, ere that, have made his peace with the Judge before whose throne he must this night render up his last account! Carry him hence; not a word will I hear in his favour. Bind his arms, — look that he does not escape, — your lives shall answer it, — away with him.”

A cry of horror escaped from the royalists at hearing this summary and cruel sentence, so exactly the counterpart of that by which the unfortunate Sir Charles Lucas and his friend had been condemned to a sudden and violent death. All who were present now spoke in fa-

your of Sir William Bastard, in the hope to obtain for him some mercy, even at the hand of a man so stubborn as Colonel Holborn. But he listened only to a few words spoken by Sir John Copplestone, or rather whispered by that wretch into his ear :—" Wherefore spare him an hour ? Why not instant execution ? Have you forgot, Colonel, what was said by the Earl of Essex in answer to Master Hyde's prayer, that he would interfere to save Stafford's life ? ' Stone dead hath no fellow, and that as soon as may be.' Marry, there was sense and prudence in that saying."

" I know what I do," replied the Colonel, whispering in his turn ; " I do but delay the execution one hour, in the hope that the terror of its approach may move these men to confess (with a view to save his life) whatever they may chance to know of the Cornish plot, now ready to burst over our heads."

" And will you spare him if they do confess ?" enquired Copplestone.

" Ay, as Joab spared Absalom," replied Colonel Holborn ; " he thrust him through the

heart with three arrows lest one should fail him."

"Good," cried Copplestone: "I will leave you to question these men; they are eager to speak with you. I would not longer tarry, lest I seem a bloody-minded man, who would enjoy the fall of my enemy. Farewell for awhile." Copplestone left the hall.

Tremaine now spoke. "Colonel Holborn," he said, "you are a soldier, and, as such, you should know that it is a generous part, and one which becomes the brave, to spare a fallen foe. Sir William Bastard is a prisoner. Keep him in close confinement if you will; send him on ship-board; banish him; any thing you will, but spare his life, lest your own be called upon to answer it hereafter."

"You shall answer it both here and hereafter," exclaimed Trelawny; "as I am a man you shall answer it. Though now in bonds, I am neither faithless nor friendless; and I swear, as there is truth in earth or heaven, this foul deed shall be avenged. Cornwall and Devon will at my word rise to do justice in requital for

the wrongs of my friend. Let me go ; unhand me, fellow," he continued, as he struggled to free himself from a trooper who held him back ; " I will speak, I will be heard ; this slaughter in cold blood shall not go forward ; he shall not die, as there is a God above us he shall not."

" Think of his youth, of his honourable mind, his gallant spirit. Spare him, Colonel Holborn," said Sir Piers Edgcumbe, — " spare him as you would, may be, yourself one day be spared. Show him mercy, ere you ask mercy again of Heaven."

" I am not merciless," said Colonel Holborn ; " but I must do my duty. If I spare Sir William Bastard it must be in order to benefit the country. On no other condition can he hope to find pardon, after his many offences to the parliament, in having become the principal leader of these dark plots. If I accept his ransom you must pay down the price."

" Name it !" the royalists exclaimed with one voice.

" I will pay it, though the demand extends to my last coin," said Sir Piers.

“ Give up the names of the leaders in the Cornish plot, which you refused to communicate to Sir John Copplestone, till the King should be in the west ; give them up, I say, and the prisoner lives.”

The countenances of the royalists fell ; and a deep sigh burst from the bosom of Sir Piers Edgcumbe as he said, “ I would do all for Sir William’s service that I would do for my own son ; but not to save that only son would I become a betrayer, though he had twenty lives to forfeit. Oh that I should live to see this hour ! What can I do for thee ?”

“ Do nothing, dear Sir Piers,” said Sir William : “ my friends, I thank you all ; but I am content to die, and more cheerfully shall I go to meet my fate than these men will one day think upon it. Colonel Holborn, you are about to commit an act of murder ; I leave vengeance to him who saith it is his own. He will remember my blood as it rises up in judgment against you. Yet repent, and I forgive you this day’s deed. Farewell, my friends, give me your prayers, no sorrow, no

tears: they will unman me. I would have been content to have died for the Prince in a fair field: this death has in it something less honourable; yet it is in his service that I meet it. Farewell, may God preserve the King."

Sir William Bastard was led forth to the chapel, there to await the termination of the hour destined as the utmost limit of his devoted life, — a small portion of time between him and eternity. Yet small as it was, it was a space not always allowed, during the civil wars, when the sentence of a summary trial (if trial it could be called, where there was neither a legally constituted judge nor jury,) was too often the consequence of private malice under colour of public justice.

Sir William Bastard could have no hope to find mercy; since, independent of the deadly hatred in which he was held by Copplestone, he had long been marked for a sacrifice on the first favourable occasion as a young cavalier known to be of a hot and fiery spirit, and capable of heading any enterprise that required courage and address in the King's cause.

CHAP. XV.

How would you be
If he, which is the top of judgment, should
But judge you as you are? Oh, think on that;
And mercy then will breathe within your lips
Like man new made. SHAKSPEARE.

WHEN Sir John Coplestone retired from the hall, he sought the solitude of his own chamber. On entering, he threw himself into a chair in great agitation, as if to recover breath. Scarcely was he seated when he heard a slight noise without: the door moved and opened. "Who comes hither?" cried Coplestone exceedingly startled, as he arose and placed his hand upon his arms.

"It is I who come, my father," said Gertrude, as she entered with a solemnity of look and manner that formed a striking contrast to the restlessness and agitation so evident in her parent. "What is this I hear? You have

betrayed these unfortunate gentlemen who took shelter beneath your roof; and one of them is condemned to death. 'This is most dreadful — you must not let him suffer.'

"He must die, Gertrude," replied Copplestone: "his life is forfeited as a traitor to the parliament, and an enemy to liberty."

"Oh, call him not such, my father," said Gertrude with energy. "Sir William Bastard is no traitor; for he did but his duty to his sovereign, whose misfortunes stir up all honest hearts in his cause. An enemy to liberty do you call him? Alas! where is liberty? not in smiling England, where she was wont to dwell as in a land of safety. Those happy days are past; her liberty is changed to bondage. Once might the poor man reverence the rich, receive his benefits, but never fear his power. Now all is changed; and tyranny and fanaticism rule with a rod of iron. Our prisons are too small to hold our own unhappy people; whilst the law, wrested as it is to every purpose of injustice, is yet too slow in its process for the dreadful purpose of revenge; and therefore does a

summary verdict, sanctioning murder, crown the work."

Copplestone, though generally showing a severe and haughty temper to Gertrude, nevertheless at times felt the ascendancy of her high spirit; and in some moments, ere he could summon up a passionate resolution to drive her from him (when he found it impossible to answer her), he stood in awe even of his own daughter.

Some undefined, some strange and mingled, feelings, this night prevented him from sending Gertrude immediately away from him. He listened to her for awhile in sullen silence, with eyes bent on the ground, till, at length, he did a thing not unusual with him, — he made an attempt to justify himself in her eyes.

"Gertrude," he said, "you know not on what a fatal necessity I have acted a part which I see in your mind exposes me to misapprehension. In another I should not heed this; but I would have my daughter think rightly of her father. I have deeply weighed this matter; I have pondered over it day and night, and I

have acted on the full conviction that any attempt once more to raise the western counties for the King ought to be checked at any price. I have done, what your favourite poet calls, a small wrong to do a great right; I agreed with those deep in wisdom and high in honour; I agreed, I say, with such, to enter into the plots of these dangerous men on purpose to discover and prevent them. I have done so: to save poor bleeding England from farther loss did I do it. I have not acted without knowledge; that knowledge which is the boast of man."

"Oh, talk not of knowledge," said Gertrude, with energy: "what is it but a curse, if it have not God for its object? for the first discovery of the first man, when he turned from his Maker, was to undo himself. Obedience gave him innocence, knowledge death, God's promise immortality; hope nothing then without God's law, and that is mercy: he must not die!"

"I have sworn it, Gertrude," said Copplestone: "plead not for him; not only is he a traitor, but a foul-mouthed railer against truth,

and an enemy to me. Did I but consult the passion of a just revenge, he dies !”

“ Say not so, my father,” cried Gertrude ; “ rather consult thy better angel, who points the way, through mercy’s path, to peace. What is revenge but a demon stealing into our bosom, where it is cherished for our own misery ? Consult thy reason, not thy passion ; for passion, being blind, leads ever to destruction. Thou wilt save his life ?”

“ I must not, Gertrude ; did I do so, I were a ruined man. Sir William Bastard is known as the most fiery spirit of the west ; dreaded for his example, he enkindles men by his daring acts. Hark thee, wench, to answer all in one word—I am pledged to Cromwell that he shall die.”

“ To Cromwell !” exclaimed Gertrude ; “ and who is Cromwell but a man ? a bold one, I grant, but subtle as the wily serpent. Heed him not. Talk not of man, whatever be his power to do thee service, if it must be bought with blood. Is not God more powerful than man ? Seek, then, his favour rather than that

of a little breathing dust ! You, and all of you, desire power, prosperity, but as a means of happiness. Go, then, make your suit to God : knock at his door, and he will not deny you. Fear not to trust him, for he is faithful ; fear not to ask him, for he is the universal Giver ; fear not to hope in him, for his word shall never fail you ; but, oh, fear to sin against him, for he will judge you."

"No more," said Copplestone : "I must not hear this pleading ; it would suit a church, but it is scarcely suited to a private chamber."

"Truth suits all places," replied Gertrude ; and she continued to speak with all that energy of manner which despair imparts to a feeling mind, when pleading its last hope. "It is of God I speak, the most high God, and of your duty to obey his law of mercy. In all places, at all hours, it is fitting to speak of him, for he is ever near you. You need not wander far to seek him, for your own heart may be his temple, would you but write upon it, Holiness unto the Lord ! Sanctify it then with mercy !"

"You plead in vain," said Copplestone : "let

me go ; the hour draws on ; I must descend ; Colonel Holborn looks that I should see him ere the execution of the sentence. Let me go."

" I will not," said Gertrude, kneeling and holding him by the cloak ; " I will grow here—I will die at your feet, ere I let my father go to dip his hands in blood. Turn to me, look upon me ; I am your child, the same who in infancy you thought would live to be the hope of your heart, the prop of your age. You would not then let the very air wander near me, lest it should be too rude ; and would you now break my heart, and send your only child, untimely, to her mother's tomb ?"

" Ha !" exclaimed Copplestone, " is it so ? you do not seek to hide it : you avow, then, that you do feel for this criminal the fondness I once suspected. It is enough ; had he no other fault than that of having stolen into the affections of a thing of mine, he should die. *That* man, my enemy, my most inveterate enemy, he shall not live to wed thee ; he shall never own one acre of my land, let me be living or dead. I did not

think thou wouldst have done me the injury to love him."

"I do not, I will not," cried Gertrude; "I would forswear all hope, all thoughts of him for ever, rather than by my — my means he should suffer the least wrong."

"Strong must be thy affections to say so," replied Coplestone; "thou art not in thy feelings altogether unlike the woman who stood before the throne of Solomon. The harlot, who had no affection, would have seen the child perish sooner than have given up her claim; but the true mother had that tenderness which denied its own rights, so the boy might live. Solomon was a wise judge, yet had he lived in these days, his wisdom would hardly have sufficed to deal with the wicked now abroad, when they rise up around us, countless as the stars. Let me go, wench. Nay, then, I must use force, and break from thee."

"Yet a word, yet hear me!" said Gertrude; "only hear me!"

"I must not, I dare not," exclaimed Coplestone; "for one waits who expects to hear a

signal that shall be the last that ever meets his ear, till the trumpet call shall rouse up the sleeping dead. I shall hear it then as well as he, yet not even then will I quail for this deed."

As Copplestone spoke he turned his cold, stern, and ruthless eye upon Gertrude, as she knelt at his feet, as, with the tears running down her pale cheeks, and with upraised hands and eyes, she looked on her father with all the eloquent expression of female tenderness and virtue in affliction. She saw his inflexibility, and only said in a faint low voice, as she wrung his hand in the agony of the moment, "When that last, dread trumpet sounds, may God show you more mercy than you now do to a fellow-being in his hour of need!"

Scarcely had she spoken, when, as if it had been preconcerted that some external circumstance should combine with his daughter's words to sound an alarm to the conscience of Copplestone, the long-drawn notes of a bugle rung through tower and hall, and echoed among the ancient turrets and woods of Warleigh.

Copplestone stood still, listening in mute sur-

prise, so sudden and so well-timed had been that summons. He shuddered as he listened; Gertrude started from the ground. "What noise is that?" said Copplestone. His daughter made no reply. "I will to the hall," he said, and instantly left the room. Gertrude rushed to the window, looked out—a torch was burning below; a stranger held it. She waved her hand to him who bore it; and flew from the chamber with steps that scarcely touched the ground.

CHAP. XVI.

——— Whence is that knocking?
How is 't with me, when every noise appals me?

Break up the gates, I'll be your warrantize;
Shall I be flouted thus by dunghill grooms?

SHAKSPEARE.

THE loud burst of the bugle, which had so suddenly startled Sir John Copplestone and surprised Gertrude, was almost immediately followed by a confusion and disorder that astonished those who were assembled in the hall. Loud shouts, the clashing of arms, the tramping of horse, the fire of musketry, the alarm of the troopers, and the cries of the sentinels, all proclaimed that some sudden and daring attack was made upon the soldiery now posted so as to surround the house.

Colonel Holborn, who was still in the hall, endeavouring to extort from the captured royalists some confession relative to their Cornish associates, stood, for a few minutes, even stu-

pified with surprise. Bold and hardy by nature, and of a courage that was not to be shaken by the suddenness of any danger, he would gladly have left the hall instantly to join his men without: but the fear that by so doing he should give an opportunity for the escape of his prisoners detained him; so that he remained doubtful, confused, not knowing how to act on this emergency.

Whilst he thus paused, those without lost no time in executing their purpose: they were strong in numbers, and yet stronger in resolution, well armed, and, though not regularly disciplined, nevertheless, from long practice in sudden affrays, under the conduct of a bold and spirited leader, were not wanting in those warlike arts which give to hardihood all the advantages to be derived from prudence, management, and skill. The roar of voices, the fire of musketry, and the attempts made to force the doors of the house, still continued in deafening clamour, as, every now and then, might be heard, above the tumult, the cries of “ Roger Rowle! On to the hall — lead on — follow our

Captain, Roger Rowle ! Where is Sir William Bastard ? Force the door. Roger Rowle ! ”

“ The Philistines are upon us,” said Colonel Holborn, turning to Sir John Copplestone, who was now again in the hall. “ We are lost ! ”

“ Let us not live in vain, then,” said Copplestone : “ were it not well to send our prisoners to death before us ? Do you secure the door : I will forward to the chapel : there is a secret way to it, that I wot of : I will despatch him with my own hand ere he shall be rescued.”

Whilst Sir John Copplestone spoke these words, some of the assailants thundered at the hall doors, demanding admittance, and threatening to set fire to them if no force could avail. Colonel Holborn, as well as the guard stationed in the hall, was, at this moment, engaged in a desperate struggle with the royalists, who, soon finding those without came as deliverers, attempted to overpower the soldiery, so as to enable themselves to give admittance to their friends. To describe the various passions which now agitated those within the hall would be impossible. Desperation gave a more than

natural strength to the struggles of the royalists : they were unarmed men ; whilst the Colonel and the guard were, on the contrary, fully armed, and sought to prevent their purpose : they must, therefore, have completely triumphed, but for the distraction occasioned by a new event equally unforeseen, which obliged the Colonel to draw off some of his men to guard another entrance where the rabble crew were thundering and breaking down the doors to gain admission.

Several of the servants of the house, in utter dismay at this new assault, had rushed into the hall, where, struck with terror as they heard the firing without, they stood pale, trembling, and looking on, uttering exclamations of wonder and affright, as the danger seemed to draw near and more near to them. Many seemed not only to have lost all presence of mind, but even their very wits with terror ; yet there was one amongst them, a young page, who retained both sense and spirit, and he soon showed he could employ both, since on hearing the threat dropped by Copplestone as he spoke apart to Colonel Holborn, intimating that he

would despatch his prisoner with his own hand in the chapel, ere he should be rescued, the page flew to communicate what he had heard to his young mistress; and having done so, glided back, by a circuitous way, and stole into the hall without being observed.

Colonel Holborn, during the latter part of the struggle, had encountered Sir Piers Edgumbe, and had borne him down to the ground. He was now standing over his fallen enemy, and bidding him sue for mercy. Tremaine was wounded and bleeding; Trelawny was still grappling with a trooper; Sir John Copplestone was about leaving the hall to execute his savage purpose, when a strong, resolute, and thundering force, applied to the door, was accompanied with a dreadful oath, denouncing death on all who should refuse admission to those who now demanded it with so much vehemence and passion.

“Hold out to the last,” exclaimed Colonel Holborn.

“Keep fast the doors,” cried Copplestone, “as you value life, keep them fast!”

“ Throw abroad the doors, and that without delay,” exclaimed a voice from the gallery that overlooked the whole range of the hall.

“ Who speaks ?” said Copplestone. “ Who dares command in my house ?”

“ I command here in the name of King Charles !” said Gertrude, as she came forward and stood in front of the gallery, with a demeanour and countenance to which the greatness of her resolution, in these trying moments, had given an air of courage and of dignity that was almost sublime in its effect. She stood looking upon the scene below, and encouraging, with eye, voice, and action, the almost fainting royalists, to struggle but a moment more for life, and it would be theirs in safety. She pointed to the door of Warleigh with her hand, exclaiming in a voice, and with the manner of one whose word is a command, “ Open, instantly open, and admit those who come hither in the King’s name.”

The young page, who, most probably, was prepared for such a command, and had taken his station near the door, in a moment dropped

the large iron bar by which it was secured, turned the ponderous key as if it had been a plaything, and before any one could rush upon him, so as to prevent his purpose, threw abroad the oaken doors, and admitted, like a flood, the wild men of the moors, for so were the Gubbins's and their rude Captain, Roger Rowle, most commonly called in the county of Devon. They now poured in, a confused and agitated mass; whilst the roar of voices, the shouts of victory, and the last faint struggles of their enemy, the soldiery, rendered the scene one of universal tumult and disorder.

Roger Rowle appeared as their leader: he was bareheaded, for he had lost his cap in the fray; his raven hair hung in loose curls about his shoulders, and his harsh and dark features were rendered yet more fearful by the wild expression they received from his fierce and determined spirit. He had a weapon in his hand covered with blood, and there was about him the visible marks of the contest through which he had so recently waded to act the part of a deliverer. His first action was to raise his arm

and to command silence in a voice so deep and sonorous that it was heard clear and distinct above the clamour; the same as a clap of thunder makes itself instantly audible above the roar of winds or the continual rushing and fury of the tempest.

No necromancer by forbidden arts could have produced a more instantaneous effect than did this command given by Roger Rowle. His men, accustomed to obey him under all circumstances of terror or confusion, in a moment became mute at his bidding, and stood with their harsh countenances turned on their leader, eagerly listening to receive his commands with the ready submission of so many eastern slaves; so great was the ascendancy which the spirit and genius of this man had gained over his followers and friends.

“ Let some of you go instantly and search every corner of the house till you find Sir William Bastard. Dead or alive bring him hither; and, as you value your own lives, protect him, if he be still in existence, as I hope he is.”

“ Sir William Bastard is a prisoner in the chapel, awaiting death,” said Sir Piers Edgumbe.

“ Go you to the chapel, then,” said Roger Rowle, “ and do you (addressing one who acted as his lieutenant) set at liberty these gentlemen. Give them arms, and bind the roundheads in their stead—it is but turn about. Let Sir John Copplestone be secured; but do him no harm for the sake of his fair daughter, who is a true friend to the King and the King’s friends.”

All these several orders were obeyed with the utmost alacrity; and Roger Rowle next sent forward some of his men to collect and report to him the numbers of the killed, wounded, and prisoners amongst the troopers, over whom he had achieved a victory with as much coolness and ease as if he had been a general long practised in the theatre of war. He addressed the commander of the vanquished: — “ And now, Colonel Holborn, what have you to plead, you and your officers, and your men, that the same fate should not be awarded to you which you

had prepared for these gentlemen? But for this little token, so timely received, (he placed his hand on the cross sent to him by Gertrude, as it now hung about his neck,) the noblest cavalier of the west would, ere this hour passed, have fallen by the treachery and malice of a villain. He is rescued, and you are a prisoner! What have you to plead?"

In reply to this question, Colonel Holborn answered with a spirit that showed, even now he was in the hands of one so daring and so lawless as Roger Rowle, he would not submit to sue to him for favour.

The sudden capture of Warleigh House was neither the first nor the most difficult enterprise of the kind undertaken, with good success, by Captain Rowle and his people during the civil wars. Though fierce in action, he was not cruel after victory; so that he never put a prisoner to death unless he had been guilty of some base act towards the royalists, or towards any one of Roger's own subjects; and the way in which he managed with his prisoners is much too curious to be here passed in silence. He invariably

suffered all such as had the means to do so to buy their liberty at a moderate ransom ; and the very stone on which it was told down retains, to this day, the name of *Rogue's Rock* on Dartmoor.

His prisoners were allowed to communicate by letters (subject to Roger's inspection) with their friends or relatives ; who were commanded at such an hour, on such a night, to send, by one person only, a sum named (according to the ability of the prisoner, or of his friends, in compounding for his ransom): this was to be well secured in a leathern purse, and to be deposited on the flat slab of granite, commonly called *Rogue's Rock*, and situated on a particularly open space on the moor.

The ransom thus deposited on the stone, the bearer of it had a certain time allowed him to withdraw out of sight ; but if he lingered to watch *who* might come for it, or to gratify in any way his curiosity, or suspicions, he was sure to receive a bullet as his reward. The sum paid, the prisoner, on the next day, was guided blindfold to the same open space, where a written

discharge was put into his hands (to secure him from further molestation should he chance to fall in with any of Roger's stragglers), and his blind being removed from his eyes, he was left to lose himself upon the wild and desolate moor, or to find his way home as well as he could.

Such was Roger Rowle's practice in liberating his prisoners of war: when he had several, he never trusted them altogether in the same place, lest they should overpower their guard, but he dispersed them about in different directions, some in the glen of Lidford, and others near Brentor; for at the date of our tale his gang was so strong in numbers, that it was said to consist of above one hundred and fifty stout fellows, including the tribe of the Gubbins's, who were the first subjects of his rule. The wounded he never removed, as they were likely to become troublesome, and, if left behind, could not instantly rise up and follow in pursuit. He had few prisoners on this night to bear away from Warleigh, so many of the troopers having been killed or severely hurt in the fray.

“ To-night you must away with us, Colonel Holborn,” said Roger Rowle, “ and your officers must bear you company: a hundred spur royals* must be your ransom; for I know your wealth, and you know my way on Rogue’s Rock. That is a new name given to an old stone, and not a bad one; since rogues are there redeemed with what made them such — money. Here comes Sir William Bastard: unbind his arms, give him a sword; he is a brave gentleman. Welcome, Sir William; nay, no thanks to Roger Rowle, rather pay them to the old roundhead’s daughter, she who stands there in the gallery, and looks like a queen: she it was who gave us notice of your danger, and we have but obeyed her summons in coming hither to rescue you from the clutches of these hawks. Thank yonder noble lady; you owe your life to her.”

Sir William Bastard looked up at Gertrude: his eyes spoke a thousand thanks, but not one escaped his lips; so much was he surprised and agitated by what he learnt from Roger Rowle. He could not summon resolution sufficient to

* A spur royal was a coin of the time of James the First.

thank her, in the ardent terms his heart dictated, before so many witnesses; and cold thanks he would not speak: he bowed, therefore, to her gracefully, but remained silent.

Copplestone, however, spoke; and with many bitter words did he now reproach his daughter for her want of duty and of reverence to the existing powers of the state, in having thus interfered to render abortive their plans of removing from the land so many troublesome royalists. On hearing this, Sir Piers Edgumbe and Trelawny exchanged looks, as they both understood by these few words, inadvertently dropt by Copplestone in a moment of irritation, that the rebel government had destined them to be sent on board the miserable prison-ships, so often freighted with captive royalists, for some far and foreign land.

Colonel Holborn, also, with the fanatical insolence of his temper (and fanaticism generally destroyed all those feelings of delicacy which inspired the respect usually paid to women), now cast on Gertrude many reproaches that were at once rude and unmanly: it seemed as

if, having no other weapon with which he could wound her, he did not scruple to use his tongue, in the deep resentment he felt for her having been the means of snatching from him his prey, at the very instant he held it within his grasp.

Sir William Bastard, fired with anger at hearing these daring reproaches cast on Gertrude, advanced towards Colonel Holborn with an air of defiance; but recollecting that he was now an unarmed man and a prisoner, he checked the transports of his anger, and contented himself with no other reply than that of advising the Colonel, for his own sake, to cease from railing in the presence of those who would be very likely to resent it in a manner he would not like. But Copplestone, who feared not for himself, since his daughter's merit was this night his protection, did not hesitate to vent upon her the most bitter reproaches, in which he was joined by Colonel Holborn, for having aided the royalists, in defiance of the parliament and the liberty of the people.

Gertrude, (who had never stirred from her

station in the gallery, but continued to watch with an attentive eye what was passing in the hall,) deeply wounded by these reproaches, for a moment forgot her resolution to bear all in silence and in patience, and replied to them with spirit.

“Talk not of liberty,” she said; “it has been made but as a pass-word for rebellion. Ye have broken the King’s sceptre; ye have taken up the rod, and it has become a serpent in your hands. Not an honest, not a faithful heart in the land but you have pierced or broken. England have you made desolate — a scene of misery and slaughter. Her nobles have you cut off: her church has become a prey to the spoiler; and her venerable ministers have found their portion in the dust. Your wickedness soars high, high as an eagle’s wing, and dares the light of heaven. Your deeds no longer shroud themselves in darkness; but with an unblushing front you act them in the sight of men and angels! The shame is yours, Colonel Holborn; yours who prepared this night’s work of betrayal; and

not mine, who, under God, defeated it. My father is preserved from sharing in a cruel deed, which you had determined should be accomplished this night beneath his roof. Sir William Bastard and you, gentlemen, are free; but let me counsel you to leave this miserable country, where your enemies will never cease to spread nets to ensnare you to your ruin. My part in your deliverance is ended; farewell, and may God preserve you still to serve the King."

She bowed and retired from the gallery, as a murmur of applause arose from the hall. The royalists were enthusiastic in expressing their admiration of Gertrude, whilst the wild and half savage followers of Roger Rowle gave rude but honest tokens of applause; so much had her high courage, and the fearless manner in which she expressed her feelings for the King's cause, impressed even their untaught minds with the force and eloquence of truth.

CHAP. XVII.

You see me here, you gods, a poor old man,
As full of grief as age ; wretched in both !

What say you now ? What comfort have we now ?
By heaven, I 'll hate him everlastingly,
That bids me be of comfort any more. SHAKSPEARE.

SCARCELY had the outlawed captain secured his prisoners, and was about taking his final departure, when the hall door, which had been secured, was again assailed by a loud knocking. Roger Rowle, who on this night, after his victory, had taken upon himself to preside in Warleigh Hall, as if it had been his natural place to do so, ordered his people to reconnoitre, and to demand who it might be desired admission at that hour of the night.

A voice without replied, " that he who knocked was one Captain Coleman, who came on some important and painful business, which he had to communicate to Sir John Copple-

stone." On this being repeated to Roger Rowle, he desired the fellow should be admitted; determining, in his own mind, that if he came on any doubtful errand, he should find a night's lodging, well secured, with the rest of the prisoners.

Copplestone, who, from the respect that was paid to his daughter, was treated with no other severity than that of not being suffered to quit the hall, till Roger and his companions should have taken their departure, on hearing the message conveyed by Coleman through the door came forward, and with some agitation of manner begged that he might be suffered to enter; at the same time giving an assurance that Coleman was one who would do no harm.

The door was accordingly opened, and admitted the noble captain to a scene that filled him at once with astonishment and dismay. Nothing could be clearly understood, excepting what was too obvious to be mistaken; namely, that Sir John Copplestone, with whom he had been in league as a tool of the rebel government, had certainly this night got the

worst of it, and was in the clutches of his enemies. Unnecessary insolence, or any display of courage, where there might be real danger, were things to which Captain Coleman had never been much inclined; yet, willing to put the best face on matters, and to keep himself clear of any participation in the troubles of his patron, he did just venture to vaunt, in a few words, something about his old services to the King, and his particular consideration of unfortunate royalists, to serve whom he had often carried both sword and pistol.

“Better leave alone that matter,” whispered some one in his ear; “do not play the braggart here: remember Tamerton Lane, and the Widow Raleigh! You are known to us; you had best tell your business and begone.”

Ere Coleman could muster up courage to look round at the person who spoke in his ear, the speaker had slipped away from him, and mingled with the rest of the crowd in the hall. Every circumstance confirmed his first suspicions, and he now no longer doubted but that Sir John Copplestone’s house, like the dwellings

of many roundhead gentlemen of the day, had been attacked and captured by Roger Rowle and his gang. He lost no time, therefore, in making his communication; since he felt very uneasy till he should be rid of such company. He stated that, as he had borne the constable company to arrest a person suspected of witchcraft at Tamerton, he had discovered, lying under the oak tree on the green, the melancholy object he would now show them.

As he spoke he went towards the door, and, none preventing him, opened it, and admitted three or four persons carrying, wrapped in a large cloak, the dead body of a young man. Surprise seized on all present; none expressed it in stronger terms than did Colonel Holborn and Sir John Copplestone: but who shall describe the scene of grief and dismay which presented itself when, on removing the cloak from the face of the deceased, it was known to be Amias Radcliffe? The nature of his wounds proclaimed that he had been murdered. We pass in silence the first emotions of horror and alarm that possessed all who were present. In

the general sympathy and indignation that the sight of the body of the murdered inspired every other feeling was, for the time being, lost or suspended; and some signs, some tokens of pity seemed to touch even the hardest heart.

Sir John Copplestone was in despair; and in these moments of overwhelming distress he did not hesitate to speak openly even his most secret hopes and plans concerning the deceased. "I had looked," said Copplestone, "that he should have married my daughter. I would have given her to him, as the dearest thing I had on earth. Would to God she had been his! But now to see him thus! I will move heaven and earth to search out his murderer, whoever may have done the deed."

"Some cursedly cowardly rascal it must have been," said Roger Rowle; "for look! the deepest wound, and that which despatched him, was struck in the back: that felon blow came from an assassin's hand. Some wretch it must have been who lurks behind hedges, and in the dark, to stab honest men and noble cavaliers. I wish I had the fellow who struck that dastard

blow, in my keeping, and he should have the next tree, and a tight rope from Roger Rowle, without waiting the process of judge and jury."

The royalist gentlemen who were present, and who had so lately been rescued, all hung over the body of the unfortunate Amias, each forgetful of himself in the dreadful spectacle that lay before his eyes, a spectacle that addressed itself so powerfully to the feelings. The servants of Warleigh crowded round the body of him they had ever considered as their young master; his gentleness and kindness, whilst he lived among them, having most truly endeared him to them all. Now, therefore, to see their friend, their benefactor; so young, so amiable, and so beloved, lying murdered, dead before their sight! it was too much; and tears, imprecations on the guilty, and the most fruitless attempts at resuscitation, when not a spark of life remained, all showed how dearly Radcliffe had been loved in his guardian's family.

Whilst Sir John Copplestone was despatching some one present to announce the dreadful tidings to his daughter, Sir Piers Edgcumbe,

Trelawny, and Tremaine, spoke apart together in low whispering voices, as they every now and then turned their eyes towards the body ; and then resumed again their deep and confidential debate. Sir Piers at length demanded permission to speak with a gentleman of the neighbourhood, who acted as a magistrate, and who, having heard of the murder, had followed Coleman and his party to Warleigh, as they bore along the body. He had gained admission with them ; and without noticing the confusion so apparent from the sudden surprise of the house by Roger Rowle, employed himself solely in learning what he could about the death of Radcliffe : he felt the liveliest interest in his fate ; since Amias, from a boy, had been on the most familiar terms of friendship with his own children. It was with this gentleman that Sir Piers now spoke apart.

Whilst he was doing so, an old man rushed forward into the midst of the chamber ; and unheeding the presence of any one, never paused till he reached the body. With a passionate burst of sorrow he threw himself upon it, and

buried his face in the blood-stained breast of the deceased ; kissed the cold lips, gazed upon the still and fixed features, raised one of the stiffened hands in both his own ; but, shuddering, let it fall, as its chilling touch awoke feelings allied to horror. For awhile he stood silent and motionless, and then pressing his hands with violence upon his forehead, burst into an agony of grief, that affected every heart capable of pity, at the sight of so much real distress.

Roger Rowle enquired of a by-stander, who the old man might be who mourned with so much bitterness for the dead. He was answered, “ It is Anthony Lapthorne ; an old servant he is to this family ; he waited on the father of young Radcliffe, and loved poor Master Amias from a child.”

The old man at length spoke, as he again raised one of the cold hands of the deceased, and pressed it fervently to his bosom. “ And art thou dead ! ” he exclaimed ; “ dead ! dear Master Amias ; and have I lived to see those young eyes closed for ever in darkness—dead !

and thus covered with blood ! not a drop left in his veins to warm this hand, which was never held out to mine but in kindness. Oh ! that I could warm it into life. If all the blood which runs feebly through my weak body could, by being shed, give but life to yours, your poor old servant would pour it out, drop by drop, to the last, for your sake. Oh ! my master, my dear young master, was it to witness misery like this that I was born on your father's ground, fed by his hand, and found no comfort, nor God's word, but the blessing of both came by his means ; for he gave me all, and taught me when but a youth to know the path to life. I saw him die too — die a dreadful death ! and now his son follows ! Ay, there he is," continued the distracted old man, as he looked up and gazed on the portrait of Sir Walter Radcliffe, as it hung, a full-length figure, in the hall ; the calm, melancholy and pity-asking eye seeming, though but in its painted semblance, to look with sorrow on the body of his son, as it lay stretched out in death immediately beneath.

" He is there ?" continued Anthony, pointing

to the picture, "he looks sad; well may he look sad at such a sight as this! Oh! Sir John Coplestone, does not Sir Walter look in his very picture as if he would call upon you to do justice on the murderer of his son?"

Coplestone started, and involuntarily turned his head towards the portrait. He was about to give some answer to the afflicted old man, when the magistrate before named, who had been engaged in earnest conference with Sir Piers and the other royalists, drew him aside, and begged his attention to something he had to communicate, which would probably help to throw a light on this dark and terrible transaction.

Whilst Coplestone was speaking to the magistrate, Gertrude, pale as death, and with horror imprinted on every line of her expressive countenance, rushed into the hall: — "Where is he?" she exclaimed; "where is he laid? Radcliffe, oh Amias, my friend, my companion, my brother: do I see you thus? Good heavens, who has done this deed? Where was he found? Who is the villain that could do this act of

murder, on one so young, so brave, so kind ? Do not keep me off—I will see him ; I can bear it ! he was to me as a brother ! ”

Sir William Bastard attempted to hold her back, as he feared the shock of looking on the body of Radcliffe, wounded and stained with blood, would be more than she could bear. But Gertrude would not be withheld : she rushed up to him ; and with all the ardour of female tenderness and pity, deplored, in terms of the most passionate grief, the dreadful fate that had befallen the friend and companion of her youth.

The magistrate was still engaged in conversation with Copplestone ; he now replied aloud to some observations that had been made to him by Sir John. “ You shall hear me question them yourself, if that will satisfy you,” he said ; “ Sir Piers Edgcumbe assures me that but the night before the last, these gentlemen now present prevented an immediate rencounter that was about to take place between your unfortunate godson and Reginald Elford ; who used many violent and even threatening words, declaring that he would require the blood of

Radcliffe in requital for some injury, whose foundation was in jealousy about a lady to whom both proffered affection. The affair must be looked into ; a warrant shall this night be issued for the apprehension of Reginald Elford. The evidence of Sir Piers and of these gentlemen will be absolutely necessary to forward the process of justice."

"Sir John Coplestone," said Sir Piers, "however much you may have attempted to injure both myself and my friends (and we shall find a proper time to settle that account with you hereafter), yet, in furtherance of justice, in the hope to bring forward the man who has, I fear, dealt foully with young Radcliffe, you may summon us to bear witness to what this gentleman has but now told you. That is, if we dare, with safety to ourselves, appear in an open court, at a time when the cause we have espoused in this kingdom has been so infamously betrayed by our supposed friends into the power of our enemies."

"You have nothing worse to fear than a sequestrator's warrant," replied Coplestone,

“ for assuredly the part you have taken will not escape fine in the courts — unless — ”

“ Unless we consent to betray our Cornish friends, or fly the kingdom,” said Sir Piers, “ I for one will not fly: no, not while the King lives will I desert the land, the miserable land over which he still in right bears sway; for, though the captive of a prison, he is still my prince. We leave you now; you know our mind, and our purpose. Look to your daughter, and to yonder old man, for both seem overwhelmed with affliction.”

Copplestone now gave directions to remove Gertrude from the melancholy scene; for, bad as he was, yet even he (since the corpse of his godson was brought into the hall) seemed to have forgotten all else but the horror occasioned by an event as dreadful as it was unexpected. Roger Rowle and his wild men of the moors departed with their prisoners, having first conditioned with each for the sum that was to be paid down for his ransom. The royalists had previously left the house. Gertrude, exhausted by the anxious events of the day, and

the shock she had so lately sustained in Radcliffe's death, fainted on being removed to her chamber. The servants, alarmed by her condition, for several fainting fits ensued, sent off for Dame Gee, whose assistance was now deemed a matter of necessity, since not only the living but the dead stood in need of her aid.

CHAP. XVIII.

Murder most foul, as in the best it is ;
But this most foul, strange, and unnatural.

SHAKSPEARE.

DAME GEE's attendance on Gertrude Copplestone on the night that Radcliffe's body was brought home, gave occasion for the exercise of another branch of her avocations, namely, that of attendance upon the dead. The circumstance of Radcliffe's death, and the disorder and confusion which prevailed from the sudden attack of Roger Rowle, had so terrified and overpowered the household of Sir John Copplestone, that the housekeeper was glad to have the professional aid of Dame Gee at such a moment. She undertook the "dressing of the dead," as it was called, a custom at that time observed with many ceremonies, as a thing of the utmost importance, and not even yet wholly neglected, in some of its ancient rites, in the

more remote and obscure parts of the west of England.

In consequence of the dreadful manner in which Radcliffe had met his fate, for there could be no doubt he had been murdered, it was necessary that no part of his clothes should be removed from the body till the coroner had viewed it, and all the evidence which could be collected should be examined into by the "dead jury," for so was an inquest termed, at the date of our tale, by the common people of Devon. It was now long past midnight: all the house had retired to gain such repose as they could after the terrible events of the evening.

Dame Gee had done all she was required to do (excepting removing the clothes), to make Radcliffe, as she said, "a pretty corpse;" and, contrary to her usual custom, she did not attempt to rifle the pockets of the deceased. How this happened we cannot say: if it were that she was withheld by feelings of superstition, for she was not wholly free from such, and dreaded to meddle with a murdered person; or if it might be that she really entertained so much regard

for the memory of Radcliffe, that she wished the circumstances of his death to be minutely examined into, in order to detect his murderer, it suffices little to conjecture; but certain it is, that not on any consideration would she have removed the least thing from the clothes of one who had met his death in so dreadful a manner. It is true, she had not hesitated, on a former occasion, to rifle the doublet of Grace-on-High Gabriel, but that was whilst the man was yet alive, and the doublet was not upon his person at the moment she availed herself of its contents.

Having now strewed on the body herbs and rosemary in abundance, and not having forgotten the salt, and all things else usual on such ceremonies, she lighted the seven tapers, placed them at the head of the corpse, and set herself down to watch; nothing inclined to sleep, but musing upon the dreadful circumstances which had cut off one of the very few persons for whom she had ever felt anything like pity or good-will, nor did she cease to lament the fate of her own darling idiot boy.

As she thus sat musing, the door was softly

opened. On turning her head, to see who might be the intruder upon her "dead-watch" at such an hour, she perceived the tall and sombre figure of Copplestone wrapped in his cloak, and coming forward with a stealthy step. He bore a lighted taper, which he put down without speaking. He threw aside his cloak, and showed that he was armed.

Dame Gee looked up in his face with an enquiring eye, as if she would there read some index of the dark and hidden purpose within. There was a peculiar expression in the countenance she thus looked upon not usual with Copplestone. The cold, sinister, and cautious glance was exchanged for one bold, resolute, and daring. Yet, notwithstanding this, it seemed as if it had cost him a strong effort to assume resolution sufficient to go through a scene that was repugnant to his feelings; for he drew his breath painfully, and held his lips compressed together, as he advanced towards the body, and began to handle it with some slight trembling and agitation.

Copplestone endeavoured to open the doublet

which covered the breast ; but not readily accomplishing his purpose, he was obliged to look more closely at the object before him. Dame Gee, who had risen from her seat and advanced, also, near the corpse, now observed, that as Copplestone handled it, an expression of horror passed over his dark features, his eyes closed for a moment, and he shuddered.

“ What would you with the dead, Sir John Copplestone ? ” she said ; “ the body must not be touched till the coroner sees it ; and I am here to watch.”

“ Woman,” answered Copplestone, “ hold thy peace ; what I do is no business of thine. This youth was of my own house ; I was his godfather and his guardian ; I am here by right to examine.”

“ You shall not touch him,” exclaimed Dame Gee, with the utmost boldness ; “ not a fold of his blood-stained garments shall you lay hand upon, as there is law or power to make you answer it.”

As she spoke, she stood close to the body ; and, with a strength that was truly masculine,

endeavoured to prevent Copplestone's executing his purpose. "You would search his clothes," continued this bold watcher of the dead; "what do you look to find?"

There was a cold sarcastic bitterness in the tone and manner in which she pronounced these last words, that both astonished and incensed Copplestone, whilst they awakened a suspicion that chilled his very blood as it darted through his mind. "Ha!" he exclaimed, "is it so? then will I silence thee." He drew forth a dagger that hung by his side, and raised it in a violent and threatening manner.

"Strike, if you dare, strike!" said Dame Gee, as she drew herself back, and looked upon him with an air of courage that had in it something both to awe and to command his wicked passion.

The dagger which Copplestone held upraised fell from his hand; he turned pale as death, and, after a strong effort, found breath enough to say, in a low inward voice, "I had no intent to harm thee; I did but threaten thee: here," he continued in a hurried manner, "here is gold;

take it, woman, take it, and be satisfied. Gold buys all things on the earth, and below the earth; for it will purchase hell,—hell in all its terrors, and in all its power, too. Take gold, and hold thy peace. I would but search these horrid garments, stained as they are with this young blood. Oh, that it were still warm and flowing through those veins in the full tide of life. I would but search them for a paper—a poor paper. Hear me: I have some cause to believe that this miserable and misguided youth, before he left my house, visited my chamber, whilst I was absent but for a short space, and took thence a paper of vital consequence to me and mine. I am certain he took it; for I had, in the hurry of a most important transaction, left open my cabinet; and I am now come hither, if it be possible, to recover that paper. It is no injury to the dead, and to the living it is of the utmost moment. Take this gold, therefore, and let me take what is my own; all I ask of thee is to hold thy peace. Take it, and be silent.”

Dame Gee held the purse for an instant in

her hand, balanced it as if to feel its weight, looked on the pale and ghastly countenance of the dead, then fixed her eye on the not less ghastly face of the living (for Coppelstone, white as marble, stood in fearful agitation, expecting her reply). She paused but a moment, and then cast the purse upon the ground, as she said, "Thus I reject thy offer; and know, that if every piece in that purse were doubled and doubled again, till it became of hundredfold worth in the counting, I would not touch it. You, who have worshipped gold, till the flames of hell have been as a furnace to your coinage; you, who have wronged the father and the fatherless, to fill your bags and glut your avarice, which never has enough, but still, like the daughters of the horse-leech, cries *Give! give!*—as that book tells, whose word is ever in your mouth, but never in your heart—you, I say, who do this, you judge me by your own vile account of human motives. Yet know that my soul, though dark, and, may be, wicked enough, is not so dark nor so cruel as thine. There are things which woman values more than gold. I

am a woman, a mother ! I have a mother's feelings for my son. Promise me my boy's life, and take your gold and your papers too ; I *will* keep your secret."

Copplestone listened in silence to every word she spoke ; he made no reply, but with a despatch that was alone prompted by his despair, he tore open Radcliffe's doublet, drew forth the paper and held it up, as an exclamation of triumph burst from his lips.

"And my boy, shall he live?" cried Dame Gee : "you will fulfil your word?"

"I have given no word upon his life, woman," said Copplestone ; "I would give it, I would save him—but it is too late—your son's crime could not be pardoned ; he has died the death."

"Thine, then, shall follow," said Dame Gee. "Villain, accursed man, I will demand thy blood, though my own is mingled with it by the same stroke. A mother's curse fall on thy grey head. Thou shalt not bear off the papers."

In saying this, she rushed upon Copplestone with the fury of a tigress that is robbed of her

prey—a perilous struggle ensued. She seized on the arm in the hand of which Copplestone held the papers far above her head. She fastened her teeth on his doublet that he might not escape her; she stamped on his feet in the effort to throw him down; and used every violent means within her power to accomplish her purpose. But it was all in vain; for Copplestone was a strong man, and he now put forth his strength; so that, violent and ferocious as she was, he was more powerful than she.

During the struggle a thought crossed her mind that she could even now disappoint his end; and she lost not a moment in attempting it: whilst she continued to grasp with one hand the arm that Copplestone held raised with the papers, she snatched up in her other hand one of the burning tapers, and struck it against the object thus stoutly contested. The papers, old and dry, instantly caught the flame, and as Dame Gee now exerted her utmost strength to prevent Copplestone from extinguishing them, they burnt so fast, that he was compelled to let them fall upon the ground. The current of air,

as it rushed through an open window above, carried them to a little distance; and Copplestone now attempted to rush towards the spot where they were fast consuming, in the hope to extinguish the fire with his foot.

But Dame Gee still struggled and hung about him, and never for a moment relaxed her hold till the papers, burnt to a cinder, lay a sparkling heap of ashes on the ground. Exhausted by her own efforts, she at length let him go, sunk on a chair, and said, as she pointed to the spot where she had consummated her revenge, "There is the end of thy own deed, and thy own end shall be no better; thy very name shall become a reproach, whilst thou art mingled with the common dust, that the vilest, as well as the greatest, may trample under foot."

She advanced towards the door, paused, returned once again to the body, and again spoke with all the vehemence of deep and impassioned feelings:—"I leave thee, Copplestone, I leave thee; at dawn I quit thy house, and for ever; but though thou shalt see me no more, a mother's curse for her lost son—lost when a word

of thine would have saved him — shall cling to thee. And this poor youth, too !” — she looked on the body of Radcliffe as she spoke, — “ how *he* came by his death I know not ; but I have my thoughts — his father had a fearful end ; and there are those who suspect it was by most foul means.”

Copplestone stood for some moments mute with vexation and rage, to think that he had been so foiled by a woman he held in so much contempt as he did Dame Gee. He was about replying in all the bitterness of passion, but some recollections crossed his mind, which induced him to refrain from useless reproaches for what had passed. Dame Gee, in fact, had been admitted too often into his secret councils for him to think it altogether safe to break with her entirely, or to drive her to extremities ; indeed, he feared she might do him some serious injury if he needlessly provoked her, though the worst she could say of him amounted to little more than suspicions. In sullen silence, therefore, Copplestone prepared to quit the chamber, and, as he did so, he said something to the incensed

mother about his own sorrow that he had not dared interfere to save her son; nor had he really suspected that the lad, who was a known idiot, would have suffered so summary and so speedy a judgment for his offence.

Left to herself, Dame Gee's distress took a more natural turn, and she wept for the loss of her son. The morning found her still sorrowing. As the early light of day broke in the east, its beams stole through the casement, and fell upon the dead. She looked on the pale corpse of Radcliffe, with more feeling than could have been expected from one of her character, had not her mind been softened by her own immediate cause of distress.

"Oh! this is a sad hour," murmured Dame Gee, as she stood gazing on the fixed and still features of death as they lay before her view; "it is morning with the world, but night with me; for dark is my hope, and that for ever. The cold light of early day falls on the dead; it falls on my boy, too, but it cannot wake him up to life! and thou, poor youth, thou, Radcliffe, shalt wake up no more, though the birds carol

around yonder casement with a cheerful call to the sleeper. But I will not grieve ; I will not drop a tear ; no word of sorrow shall tell my feelings, whilst I have work to do to be avenged on yonder cold-hearted hypocrite, who might have spared his young blood, and have saved me from the sorrow of a mother who mourns for her darling son. But a mother's curse shall fall upon him, even like the dew of this morning, which, as it drops upon his head, shall be changed to blood."

CHAP. XIX.

I find my zenith doth depend upon
A most auspicious star ; whose influence
If now I court not, but omit, my fortunes
Will ever after droop. SHAKESPEARE.

THE proceedings which took place on the following day, occupied many hours : all the evidence that could possibly be collected (as to the time Radcliffe was last seen at Warleigh, by whom found dead, &c.), was most minutely investigated by the coroner and jury. We do not here enter into the detail ; and shall only at present state a few of the more remarkable circumstances that seemed to throw some light on this mysterious event.

Amongst the letters found in the pockets of the deceased, was one from Reginald Elford : it bore no date, but was, most probably, written shortly after his first quarrel with the unfortunate Amias, on account of the jealousy he felt for some rival attentions paid to Agnes Piper.

In this letter, which was worded in a hurried and distracted manner, Elford conjured Radcliffe to desist from his supposed pursuit of the lady ; using many arguments, and even threats, to dissuade him from following her, and concluding with one, that was now read, not without suspicion ; since he averred that a neglect of his injunctions, on a point so dear to the writer's feelings, might cost Radcliffe his life. It was also stated in court, that Elford had quarrelled a *second* time with Amias, and was heard to repeat that very threat, only a night or two before the unfortunate young man met his death in so mysterious a manner.

Black Will likewise swore, that on the evening of the murder he had seen Reginald Elford lurking near Warleigh, with his cloak wrapped very close about his face, as if he wished to shun observation. Black Will's oath, truly, was no valid testimony, had it not been, in the present instance, confirmed by that of a highly respectable yeoman of the neighbourhood, who gave his evidence precisely to the same effect.

In consequence of these and many other minor circumstances of suspicion, the jury brought in a verdict, somewhat rashly, perhaps, of “ Wilful murder against Reginald Elford, done on the body of Amias Radcliffe.”

Elford was eagerly sought for, taken, and imprisoned on this verdict, and under circumstances that greatly aggravated the pre-conceived suspicions of his guilt. Reginald Elford was found lurking in an obscure place of shelter, between Plymouth and Tamerton, on the very morning after the murder. He had no arms with him, but a short poignard that was stained with blood. On his cloak there were also marks of blood; and his whole dress was in great disorder, like one who has been in a fray or a scuffle. His looks and manner were those of a man much agitated in mind; yet he displayed great sagacity and caution in answering any questions that were put to him on his examination; and such answers as he did give, were drawn from him with considerable effort.

He admitted that the letter found on Radcliffe was his handwriting; but denied any in-

tention to take away the young man's life, or to hold out the threat to do so, by any other means than those which he said became a man of honour — in a duel; for, unhappily, at the date of our tale, the barbarous practice of single combat, with sword or pistol, was considered as a necessary accomplishment in the character of a young and spirited gentleman. Elford positively denied being seen by Black Will, or by any one else, nigh to Warleigh, on the evening of the twentieth of June; but refused to give an account of himself on that evening, or to bring forward any evidence that could clear him respecting a point of so much moment. On again being urged to become more communicative, as even his life might depend upon it; so far from complying with these urgent solicitations, he remained stubbornly silent, and would answer nothing. Under all these circumstances of suspicion was he committed to Lidford Castle, there to await the event of his trial for life or death.

In prison, Reginald was repeatedly visited by those who examined him in every possible

way; and, under pretext of showing mercy to his youth, offered to secure for him a free pardon, would he but afford some information respecting the plots of the Cornish royalists. To all these attempts he gave the same brief and decisive negative; and awaited, though with evident impatience, the hour of his trial.

The melancholy and mysterious circumstances attending the murder of young Radcliffe excited the deepest interest throughout the country. His obsequies were performed with every mark of respect for his memory, and sorrow for his miserable fate. The concourse of people attending the ceremonial was immense; it consisted of persons of all ranks and degrees; for the kindness and affability of Radcliffe's manners had rendered him much beloved in the neighbourhood, where he had lived so many years. The indignation entertained by the public against his murderer was extreme, for it kept pace with the feeling of interest excited by his death. There was not a person, perhaps, attending the funeral, but who, in his own opinion, condemned young

Elford, as the guilty individual; and hoped he might not escape the punishment which the offended laws of his country would demand in recompence for the crime.

Before we continue our narrative relative to the prisoner, we must pause a moment to say a few words respecting another personage of our drama, and one from whom we have long been absent—Sir Hugh Piper. It will be remembered that Sir Hugh had set out to assist, by communicating with the royalists, in those arrangements intended to facilitate the escape of the King from Carisbrook Castle to the west of England. Sir Hugh was, also, to have returned in time to join the meeting of Cavaliers at Warleigh on the evening of the twentieth of June; since Copplestone had no intention that so busy a royalist as the old merchant was, should escape the net spread for him and for his friends. But Sir Hugh *did* escape it, and that by a means we shall hereafter have occasion to notice, in due time and place.

At present, suffice it to say, that whatever

intimations he received of his danger, they answered the desired end of preventing his incurring it. Copplestone's plot was one common enough in his time — namely, to join with a party of royalists, to assist them in carrying on a scheme to serve the King up to a certain point, to suffer them to hold a meeting, so as to commit themselves beyond the hope of escape, and then to pounce upon them in the very act of treason (as it was called), and so either to imprison, fine, condemn to death, or banish them, as it might best suit the interests or convenience of their infamous betrayers.

Sir Hugh Piper, after the final extinction of his hopes to see the King freed from Carisbrook Castle, felt anxious to return to his own home; for the part he had taken in the plot had detained him for some weeks both in Somersetshire and in a distant part of Devon; and during the whole time he had found no safe opportunity of communicating with his wife and daughter. He was, therefore, doubly anxious to see them. Whilst on his way home, accompanied by Cornet Davy, and not many miles

from Plymouth, all on a sudden, old Hector (that faithful companion of Sir Hugh's progresses) became so fatigued, that there was no hope he could complete the journey that night, for he had been ridden, almost incessantly, for many days together. Sir Hugh was compelled to stop, and to put up for the night at the first inn he came to. After having solaced his cares with a pipe, he retired to bed, charging Cornet Davy, ere he did so, to see the horses well fed, and ordering them to be ready saddled by day-break; as, God willing, nothing should hinder him from setting forward on his journey, as soon as it was light, so anxious did he feel once more to reach his own home at Plymouth.

The Cornet obeyed his directions; and on the morrow, the horses were ready as soon as it was day. The pasty and the flagon were standing on the table for the worthy knight's repast, and Davy sat expecting his master to descend from the bedchamber, in order to discuss the breakfast, the bill, and the weather, ere he set forward on his way home. It was, therefore, with extreme surprise that honest

Davy observed Sir Hugh's very singular deportment on entering the room ; for he stared about him as if he scarcely knew where he was ; and though he sat down to the table and handled the knife, not a morsel passed his lips ; whilst, in reply to the Cornet's usual salutation and enquiry about his health, &c., he gave scarcely any answer. Davy was surprised, and now ventured to express a hope that " his honour had slept well."

" I hope I have slept at all, Davy," replied Sir Hugh, with a countenance so grave and solemn that it was quite evident these strange words were seriously spoken.

" Surely," said the Cornet, " your honour does not mean to say that you have any doubt as to whether you have been to sleep or not ? every man must know that for a certainty."

" Cornet Davy," answered Sir Hugh, " there are times when a man can know nothing for a certainty. We used to know our friends for a certainty ; but now see how false-hearted they turn and betray us ! Think what news I learnt but so lately of the noble Burley ! and that

he and the King are both betrayed—both prisoners; and that, too, at the very hour when we looked for a certainty that our unhappy prince would be delivered from the power of his enemies. I doubt every thing now, Davy; every thing but thyself; for even old Hector broke down last night, when I looked upon it as a sure thing, that he would carry me home to supper. I doubt, Davy, if I have this night been sleeping or waking, nor can I, for the life of me, resolve that doubt.”

“Your honour, may be, has been troubled with unquiet dreams,” said the Cornet; “a sort of half-waking, half-sleeping kind of a rest, that most people call a dog sleep, not being one good enough for a Christian. Has your honour been dreaming?”

“Dreaming! Davy,” cried Sir Hugh, with strong emphasis on the word, “God only knows what may be called dreaming; it is not for a poor blinded mortal, like me, to say.”

The Cornet was exceedingly astonished, especially as these words were pronounced with unusual gravity; and though he made many

efforts to induce his master to become more explicit, it was all to no purpose ; Sir Hugh partook of a hasty breakfast, paid his score, and asked if the horses were ready.

“ They are at the door, your Honour,” replied the Cornet.

“ Well then, Davy,” said Sir Hugh, “ we will mount and away. Ask the people of the house the nearest road to Lidford.”

“ To Lidford ! your Honour,” cried Davy in great astonishment ; “ to Plymouth, you would say.”

“ I say what I mean, man,” answered Sir Hugh, somewhat hastily ; “ go you and do my bidding.”

“ To Lidford ! ” repeated Davy, notwithstanding this command : “ surely your honour intended going home to Plymouth, this blessed morning, and that with all speed.”

“ And this blessed morning I intend no such thing,” said Sir Hugh : “ once more I command you to enquire me out the nearest road to Lidford.”

“ I will do so most certainly,” replied Davy ;

“but this is so strange. May I ask, no offence I hope, may I ask what takes your honour to Lidford?”

“I really do not know, Davy,” replied Sir Hugh.

The Cornet felt even alarmed by such an answer. “Surely,” thought he, “old master must be mazed this morning. The disappointment about Burley’s plot to deliver the King from prison, has for certain turned his head;” and then he added aloud — “But your honour has some particular cause, may be, for going to Lidford?”

“None that I know of, Davy,” replied Sir Hugh; “but, may be, we shall find one when we get there. At present I know nothing; but thither I must go and without delay.”

“Well, this passes all wonder,” said Davy. “Do, dear master, think again. Lidford is a strong-hold for rebels and parliament men, who are no friends to you. Do think again, and go home to Dame Piper and Mistress Agnes; who are, no doubt, on thorns till they see you safe back to them.”

“ I tell you, Davy, that though Dame Piper and Mistress Agnes are as dear to me as the light to these eyes, I will not go home to them this day ; nor will I turn aside one inch from the road that shall take me to Lidford. So no more questions, no more doubts ; but mount your horse, Davy, enquire the road, and follow me.”

Cornet Davy did so : but as he mounted and followed in obedience to his master, he felt more than ever convinced in his own mind that his conjecture was true ; and that his old master was as mazed* that morning as man could be, unless he were an army preacher.

We leave this honest couple on their road to Lidford, but step thither before them, in company with our reader.

* Mazed is a Devonshire expression for madness.

CHAP. XX.

Hear thou, and hope not — if by word or deed,
Yea, by invisible thought, unutter'd wish,
Thou hast been ministrant to this horrid act,
With full collected force of malediction
I do pronounce unto thy soul despair.

MATURIN'S *Bertram*.

THE trial of Reginald Elford before the criminal court of assize was to be held in Lidford Castle, where, at the date of our narrative, it was usual to sit in judgment, on charges for life or death. The morning of the day on which the trial was to take place, was ushered in with the usual stir and bustle such scenes as we have to describe never fail to excite.

No sooner were the doors of the court thrown open, than the tide of human population began to flow in thick and dense; for it was but a small court, and ill calculated to accommodate the numerous spectators who so earnestly desired to satisfy their curiosity by looking upon a fellow-

creature charged with the dreadful crime of murder.

In modern times there are few places which display a greater variety of scenes and feelings than an assize town during the days of trial. The joy, the hilarity of the numbers collected together (many of whom come thither merely for the pleasure of sharing in the bustle, and meeting the company assembled); the awful duty of the court; the timidity, the apprehension of the witnesses; the misery of friends and dearest kindred, who, though innocent themselves, are too often involved in the shame and suffering of the guilty; the imposing presence of the judges; the dreadful sentence of the morning, followed by the gay assembly, the music and dancing of the night, are, all, things to be found in the town of assize in modern times, where we may sometimes see barristers and attorneys, who have been employed in duties of the most solemn responsibility all the forenoon, at evening appear like new creatures, leaving all their serious thoughts and feelings behind them with the prison, become as jocund and as light-

hearted as if neither human misery nor human guilt had so lately passed in fearful array before their sight.

It is these violent transitions which now form such diversified scenes in an English country town during the public assizes : but in the times we treat of it was otherwise ; there was something more of outward gravity and consistency, though, perhaps, less of equitable judgment in the business of the courts. Men did not then condemn their guilty fellow-men to death in the morning, and dance and sing, as if nothing at all had happened, at night ; but in the administration of justice, a royalist seldom found mercy in a parliamentary judge, nor acquittal from a fanatical jury.

We do not here say much of Lidford Castle, having already described at large that ancient edifice in a previous work, the scene of which was laid near Tavistock in the county of Devon.* We shall therefore content ourselves with stating, that the court was held within the massive walls of that castle. The gothic

* Fitz of Fitzford ; a Legend of Devon.

apartment, thus made the hall of justice, was hung with tapestry ; and the judge took his seat on a raised platform in a chair of carved oak, which, till very lately, might be seen preserved in Lidford Castle as a curiosity ; since it obtained its celebrity by being filled, at a period subsequent to that of our tale, by no less a person than the noted Judge Jeffreys of infamous memory.

Without the doors stalked, in solemn silence, many files of soldiers in the buff coat, steel breast-plate, and cap of the period ; they were armed with the matchlock, and had bandeliers across their shoulders. These soldiers were active in keeping the peace, and that by the most summary mode of all settlements in any attempt at disturbance—namely, that of knocking down or locking up the refractory on the first motion towards disorder. Many of the neighbouring gentlemen and Cavaliers were assembling ; some interested about the murdered, and others about the accused of murder. These thronged to the trial : and women, too, were not wanting in curiosity ; for some endeavoured

to rush into court, even with their children in their arms. Others, less burthened, hustled boldly their neighbours, or elbowed their way through the crowd, as fearlessly as did the men. Old and young, rich and poor, royalists and roundheads, all might there be seen mingling together in the motley group, and all governed by one and the same feeling, that of intense curiosity to witness the proceedings of so remarkable a cause. The civil officers of every degree were also present; for every justice's clerk, or constable, for miles round, thought himself bound to repair to the spot, as persons of more than ordinary importance in all legal matters and formalities of the county.

It was easy to distinguish, even in the midst of the crowd, the political character of each individual. The young Cavaliers, to a man, appeared with that reckless daring in their looks, that careless ease, and that profusion of gold lace in their attire, which (though the latter was often worn and faded, like their fortunes), still served to show what their pretensions had once been to be deemed "gay gallants" and "desperate

ruffles," so aptly described as their characteristics by the old dramatist, who did so much justice to their courage in the field and their valour with the bottle. These appeared, armed with light swords and gay sword-knots; they wore their hats cocked on their heads, and looked every man in the face, as if they neither feared to observe others nor to be observed themselves. Well might it be said, that if a bold brow and a stout heart could have supported a good cause, in defiance of fortune, Charles Stuart had never lost his head, nor his enemies have triumphed upon his ruin.

The fanatics who were assembling stalked forward; their steeple-crowned hats rising like towers of strength upon their stubborn skulls, which had undergone so many hard buffets, unharmed, during the war. These men were at all times noted for pride and scoffing; nor did they on this occasion spare to scoff at any who, differing from themselves in their precepts and opinions, now happened to stand in their way of progress towards the court.

Amongst the crowd surrounding the en-

trance, were several persons who had the "gift," as they termed it, "of preaching." These were not silent; but, with wild enthusiastic gestures and language, harangued the mob on the dreadful nature of the crime that was on this day to become the subject of trial; setting forth that the frequency of the sin was but one amongst those many judgments that had fallen on a perverse and rebellious generation. The word "*rebellious*," however, they applied in every sense excepting the true one; for, instead of finding in it an application to their own violent conduct, or to that of their party (who encouraged the most inflammatory preaching against the King), they rather chose to apply it to the unfortunate royalists, styling them "malignants," and recommending their hearers, as the most likely means for the turning away divine wrath, that they should break down, both piecemeal and altogether, the abomination of kingly tyranny, and the pride of the English church and of her ministers, and sacrifice them as they would the old iniquity, so that they

might become as a spoil and a scoffing in the face of all the people.

Amongst the auditors thus addressed, some few accompanied the preacher with groanings of the spirit, and with eyes upturned at every sentence of his extravagant harangue, whilst others only gave him a passing stare, and moved on, neither arrested by his eloquence nor disturbed by his vociferations. The Cavaliers felt differently; and but for the presence of the soldiery, and the necessity of keeping order so near a court of justice, would have pulled him down from his high stand, and have ducked him under the next pump, in requital of his doctrines.

The fanatics were, indeed, at all times, conspicuous even in their very dress. Their falling bands, square-shaped and sad-coloured cloaks, their huge boots and leather doublets, all proclaimed that attention to outward plainness, and contempt of worldly vanities, which formed one striking feature in their pretensions to superior sanctity. But, though there

was all this assumption of humility in outward things, if the inward man might be judged by the expression of countenance and carriage, there appeared in almost every one of them far more of pharisaical pride than Christian simplicity. Their ferocious, gloomy, and rancorous spirit of political opposition was apparent, as they passed their adversaries in opinion with an air of haughty contempt or of stern defiance, as if, though now forced to be at peace by the circumstances of the time and place, they were ready and willing to give vent to their feelings, in something more hostile than the angry exchange of dark looks and significant gestures. One man, accused of murder, was on this day to be tried in open court; but if hatred, deep and deadly, towards their brother (as the Scriptures they affected to follow to the letter declare), be murderous, how many would, that same day, have stood speechless, had they been arraigned for the like crime before the tribunal of Heaven!

All preliminaries in the court were soon arranged; for order was enforced with a strong

hand, and with that strictness which allowed no deviation from the customary rules. Some of the public functionaries from Plymouth were expected; and, as they were not yet arrived, a free passage was kept for ingress and egress whensoever they should appear. Amongst several of the persons who crowded in, a few endeavoured to use some disguise (such as muffling in their large cloaks, wearing their broad-brimmed hats in a shadowy manner over their faces), as if they wished to avoid too close a scrutiny; a circumstance that in one or two instances drew upon them the very observation it was intended to prevent. These, no doubt, were men more than ordinarily obnoxious to the ruling powers, whose curiosity had been stronger than their prudence.

The judge, a venerable personage, and, though a puritan, not amongst the worst of his class,—for, indeed, he possessed many qualities that rendered him a fit administrator of justice,—had taken his seat upon the bench. The jury were empannelled, and many amongst them carried in his hand a small Bible; for the laws of the

Jews were at this period as often resorted to by the fanatics, in the settlement of a verdict, as might be the crown laws of the land, in cases that came before them. The witnesses were all held in readiness; and the sea of human heads, now uncovered, and upturned, were all fixed in the attitude of watchful expectation; each eye eagerly surveying the hall in all its solemnities; when a murmur ran through the crowd, and the words, "*the prisoner*," became whispered, and echoed through the court.

At this moment Reginald Elford appeared at the bar; a manly and imposing figure, in whose countenance, pale as it was with anxiety and confinement, there appeared that high courage and resolution, that calm determination to suffer with dignity, which had so long distinguished his house. He looked neither boldly indifferent nor yet timidly bashful upon the court; but, bowing to the judge in acknowledgment of the respect due to his high place, he cast a hurried glance around, and then stood, calm and collected, with an air of attention, ready to answer the charges to be preferred against him.

“Reginald Elford,” said the judge, “hold up your hand, and hear the indictment brought against you.”

The prisoner obeyed, as the indictment was read aloud. It set forth, at much length, and with all the necessary forms and repetitions of the law, what is already known to the reader—namely, that Reginald Elford was charged with the wilful murder of Amias Radcliffe, of Warleigh, on the night of the twentieth of June, &c.

Reginald listened with the utmost patience, and when the indictment had been read to a close, the judge again spoke—“How sayest thou, prisoner, guilty or not guilty?”

“Not guilty, my Lord,” answered Reginald, in a firm and solemn manner.

“How wilt thou be tried?” said the judge.

“By God and my country,” was the usual and impressive answer; but Elford, whose recollections at this moment suggested to him the misery England, his father, and his dearest friends had suffered in the late times, replied in a tone of deep feeling, “By God and my poor country.”

“God send thee a good deliverance!” said the judge, as the counsel for the state rose to open the case. He was a little man, of a quick, lively, and penetrating cast of countenance. Though avowedly a roundhead and a presbyterian, he had good sense and good feeling enough to distinguish between political crime (for so was serving the King considered by his party) and crime against the civil rights of personal security: that, all orders and all parties were equally entitled to claim. The accusation for the crime of murder was, therefore, in his opinion, to be viewed without prejudice, and solely in reference to the evidence brought before the court. Many roundhead lawyers of the period acted on a principle far less equitable and just. Such, however, was that of Master Serjeant Crackenthorpe, a noted gownsman in his day. He had naturally, also, the feelings of a gentleman—feelings that are truly virtues of a minor order, and without which society would become as a garden choked with brambles and with weeds.

Impressed with these views of justice, the

Serjeant rose to do his duty—to state the accusation against the prisoner, without suffering any political diversity of opinion to creep in and to add one shade of colouring to darken a case which, he feared in his own mind, was already too black and wicked to admit the least ray of light in mitigation of judgment.

The counsel for the state set forth, with much learning and precision, the several kinds of killing which, in point of law, each constituted a several and distinct species of offence, from that of murder (of which petit treason was of a more aggravated nature), through the several grades of manslaughter *per infortunium*, or chance-medley, down to that of homicide *ex necessitate*, or in self-defence. He next explained, in a more minute and detailed manner, the various modes in which the above crimes differed from murder. Manslaughter being an act which, though it gives death by a means unlawful, yet there being no malice aforethought, neither expressed nor implied (*malice* forming the foundation, and being the very essence and requisite of *murder*), the deed becomes mainly

chargeable on the infirmity of human nature, and is, therefore, removed in point of crime from under the statute of murder, and those penalties, which the laws of God and of man have ever demanded for the shedding of human blood, become mitigated and softened in their infliction.

On the contrary, on a charge of murder, the learned Serjeant stated, the fact of killing being first proved beyond all doubt, in order to constitute the offence and to bring it under the statute, *malice aforethought* must also be proved; as, even in cases of the greatest provocation, passion, heat of blood, and the most just indignation, is held to be no excuse for the crime, should sufficient space of time have intervened (between the injury given and the injury revenged) to afford opportunity to the aggrieved person to cool, or to reflect upon the nature of the crime he is about to commit; inasmuch as no man, however injured, is held to be his own judge or avenger, God having expressly declared, and the laws of the country being built on that declaration, that vengeance belongs not to man: no public court, therefore, awards

punishment like a private individual : in the one, it is the verdict of a solemn, unimpassioned, and dignified fulfilment of justice ; in the other, it is that of intemperate and unadvised wrath, that knows no law, and is incapable of clear judgment, pity, or remorse.

In stating the present case, the learned Serjeant said he feared that he should bring forward witnesses before that court, by which it would be made most plainly to appear that the crime on which the prisoner stood charged, under circumstances of strong suspicion, came directly under the statute of murder ; since it must ever be remembered that, however an injury received or supposed may rebut the charge of malice, it will be no reply in mitigation to malice directly proved. In the course of the proceedings, he (the counsel for the state) should adduce witnesses who would attest that a long and deadly hatred had subsisted between the deceased and the prisoner at the bar ; that it had been augmented by the difference of political opinion, the violence of party spirit, and, above all, by the inflamed passions of jealousy

in the rivalry of courtship and of love—passions whose bitterness, it was well known, had too often led the way to the most fatal crimes ; and it was much to be feared that, in the present instance, they had hurried the unhappy prisoner at the bar into that deed with which he now stood charged.

The Serjeant then proceeded to state that he should produce witnesses who would depose that, not long before the murder, the deceased and the prisoner were once engaged in single combat or duel ; these hostile meetings having been solely urged on by the violence and passion of the prisoner, who first drew upon the deceased. It would, likewise, appear that a second attempt of the same kind was made by him to shed the blood of his opponent ; and on its being prevented by the interference of friends, the prisoner had threatened, in gross and passionate language, that he would require the blood of the deceased. A letter had also been found on the body of Amias Radcliffe, which the accused admitted to be written by himself ; the purport of which tallied with all the fore-

going circumstances to make against him, as the language in which it was couched was at once violent and threatening, and showed a dark and vindictive spirit towards the deceased.

It would also appear that, on the evening of the murder, Reginald Elford was seen lurking in a mysterious manner near Tamerton Folliott; and that, when taken on the morning after, he was found seeking concealment and in evident distress and disorder: his cloak and clothes being soiled, torn, and stained with blood; a short sword, the only weapon he had about him, also bearing marks of blood; and a weapon it was, which altogether corresponded with the nature of the instrument by which the deceased must have received his death wound.

The latter circumstances, with the manner and the place in which the prisoner had passed his time on the night of the twentieth of June, he had hitherto not accounted for in any way that could prove satisfactory; in fact, he had generally preserved an obstinate silence when questioned on these points. The Serjeant then proceeded to observe, that he did

not mean to infer that the silence of the prisoner should be considered as a proof that he *could* not give any satisfactory account of himself on that fatal night; possibly he might intend doing so in his defence; possibly he might call witnesses to prove an alibi; so as to establish, by incontrovertible facts, the impossibility of his being on the spot to commit the crime of murder, at the time it was committed. These were proofs that it was to be hoped, it was to be expected, the prisoner would produce; but all that he (the state counsel) argued was, that if the prisoner failed in producing such proofs, the combination of circumstantial evidence, taken both severally and collectively, must tend to prove the prisoner guilty of the crime with which he now stood charged. The learned Serjeant concluded with saying, he should proceed to call his witnesses in support of the indictment.

Having thus stated, somewhat at large, the speech of Master Serjeant Crackenthorpe, we think it would be both tedious and unnecessary to follow it up by giving all the evidence which

he brought forward to support every item of the charge : suffice it to say, that there was not one, but what was most distinctly supported ; and in some instances, by the mouths of witnesses who evidently gave their testimony with the greatest reluctance ; so much did the youth, the fortitude, and the firm and manly bearing of the prisoner interest every one present.

The evidence commenced by proving the finding of Radcliffe's body by Coleman, Dolly Summerfield, and the constable. Each of those worthies gave their depositions in a characteristic manner. The Captain lamented his coming up too late to seize upon the murderer, and to prevent the crime with the valour of his own unassisted sword ; and thence took occasion to ramble into certain digressions that had nothing whatever to do with the business in question. He was reminded by the Judge to keep to the points of evidence, and not to comment unnecessarily on any irrelevant matter.

The Captain, whose learning and information were pretty much upon a par with his courage, not exactly knowing what the word *irrelevant*

might mean, but fancying it had something to do with the Bible, answered his lordship, that he begged pardon, and assured him that he did not mean to talk of religion in that court, or of any thing that the gentleman at the bar who now examined him, had nothing to do with. This apology of the Captain's, which was really intended as very civil, produced a laugh in court that met with rebuke from the bench, as being highly indecent during the proceedings of a trial of a nature so solemn as the present.

Dolly Summerfield, or Captain Doll, whose unblushing effrontery far exceeded that of Captain Coleman, in spite of being frequently called to order, gave her evidence with many Scriptural allusions to the nature, offensiveness, and abomination of the sin of murder; and concluded with calling down the thunders of Heaven on all those who did not "up and tell," as she said, "in the face of all the earth, all they knew about the matter, to bring such a rascally malignant, as he who stood at the bar, to the gallows; which, for his sake, she wished might be as high as that of Haman, prepared for him

by Mordecai the Jew, who was seen sitting in the gates."

The constable who gave his evidence as to the finding of the body, averred, that it was his belief that the devil and the Archangel Michael had stoutly contested for it, as they did for the body of Moses; and though he did not give it positively as a part of his evidence, yet he nevertheless intimated it was his belief, that at his own and Captain Doll's coming up on the spot, both being of the number of the elect, the devil had fled bodily, leaving a strong scent of brimstone behind him, as if he had been but just unchained from the bottomless pit; as, no doubt, he would be again in a very short time, and for very wonderful purposes, if the Godly, under General Cromwell, thus happily continued to hasten on the end of the world."

The constable, who was a Millennialite, was with some difficulty stopped in the midst of his harangue; for he seemed much disposed to turn the witness-box into a pulpit, and to constitute himself a lay preacher for the benefit of the court.

Other witnesses came forward: Sir Piers Edgcumbe was among them. He was exceedingly attached to young Elford, and now appeared and gave his evidence with much painful feeling: for though his sense of the sacred observance due to truth would not allow him to suppress any one circumstance that told against Elford; yet he, nevertheless, endeavoured to soften down the asperity of those facts which could not be denied, that were likely to give a more unfavourable turn to the evidence. And when asked as to whether he believed, from any thing he had seen, that jealousy was the primary cause of Reginald Elford's hatred of Radcliffe, he said, "Alas! yes," in a tone and manner which showed how reluctant he was to speak to any point that was likely to establish the fact of "*malice aforethought*," that would inevitably bring the crime under the statute of murder.

Trelawny and Tremaine gave their evidence as to the circumstances of the quarrel at the masque, &c., in a plain and simple manner, answering only such questions as were put to them, and avoiding all comments as unnecessary.

Black Will, with a brow of brass, and in a manner alike devoid of doubt or feeling, swore point blank that it *was* Reginald Elford, whom he had seen wrapped up in a cloak and skulking near Tamerton on the evening of the twentieth of June. The yeoman, who supported this testimony, was a man of good character; and his evidence, therefore, bore considerable weight in making against the prisoner.

Of all the witnesses who appeared on this remarkable trial, no one was so deeply distressed, or so much an object of pity, as Agnes Piper; The mention of her name (in the charge against the accused), as the object of his love, of his jealousy, and the rivalry that had subsisted between the young men, had rendered her a witness of great interest and curiosity with the court, as she came into it, pale, trembling, agitated, her eyes suffused with tears, and not daring to look the prisoner in the face lest she should betray thus publicly the nature of her feelings for him. All eyes were now turned upon her, and a murmur of sympathy arose at the sight of her agitation and distress.

Reginald Elford, who had borne all the previous part of his trial with that undaunted resolution, that perfect calmness and self-possession, which, in a situation like his, commands respect even towards the guilty, felt his courage die within him at the sight of Agnes. The conviction that she who was dearer to him than life should now appear against him, should, possibly, become the instrument of his destruction, was a thought too agitating to be endured with calmness. He looked upon her with a countenance in which all the anguish of his soul was painted in a strong expression of affectionate remonstrance; and the words, “Is *she*, too, against me?” escaped his lips in a low but distinct voice, that was heard throughout the assembly.

Agnes caught the sound, and looked up; her eyes streaming with tears as she wrung her hands and said—“I am not against you; I am summoned hither against myself—against my own will—to speak the truth: may God deliver you!”

“Amen to that wish,” said Elford, “for I am innocent.”

The oath was now administered; and on making this solemn appeal to the Almighty Judge of heaven and earth, that she would speak “the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth,” Agnes shuddered; for she felt as if she had put her seal to the death-warrant of Elford, in whose entire innocence she had so confidently believed. With extreme difficulty, and not without some confusion — so great was her distress — she deposed to all she knew concerning the cause of jealousy and quarrel between Amias Radcliffe and the prisoner at the bar.

Much of what she said was drawn from her by the acuteness of the counsel, who, practised in tracing out truth through every clue of error, of falsehood, and of doubt, soon compelled her, by the skill he displayed in sudden and unexpected questions, to confess that the quarrel had been commenced and aggravated by Elford, and that Radcliffe was not wholly free from those offences that had been charged upon him by

his passionate opponent. Having sifted her evidence to the very dregs, and having drawn forth many little circumstances, all of which went against the accused, she was permitted to retire, almost fainting, from the court.

In doing so, she cast an agonised look on Elford, as if to ask his pardon for the reluctant part she had taken in his destruction ; but when she saw him with folded arms, his head bent upon his bosom, his eyes fixed on the ground (as if wholly overpowered by the cruel circumstance of *her* being against him), with every appearance that life itself had become indifferent to him, all that feeling of conscious rectitude which had hitherto supported, in a moment deserted her ; she looked at him once more imploringly, as if one answering look of pity would have been a balm, a blessing to her wounded feelings ; but his eyes were still averted, his attitude was still cold and listless as that of a marble statue, in which there is only the semblance of life ; her senses forsook her ; she dropped into the arms of one who stood near,

and in that condition was carried out of the court.

The next witness examined was Sir John Copplestone; he took the customary oaths with formal solemnity, never once looked the prisoner in the face, and said not a word but what was drawn from him: his deposition merely went to prove that his godson, Amias Radcliffe, had intimated his intention of absenting himself from Warleigh till such time as he should come of age; since, Sir John allowed, that Radcliffe and himself had not been on such cordial terms for some time past, in consequence of his godson and ward refusing to accede to an offer he had made to him, namely, that he should marry his daughter, Gertrude Copplestone, — a circumstance that must prove to all the world the high estimation in which the unfortunate deceased was held by his guardian. Sir John then proceeded to name the hour he last saw him alive in his own house; and one or two of the servants were now brought forward, who swore that they had seen Master Amias Radcliffe quit Warleigh about eight o'clock in the evening of the twen-

tieth of June; and it had been only just past the hour of nine when he was found murdered beneath the oak close to Tamerton churchyard.

It is not our intention to enter very minutely into the details of the trial of Reginald Elford. At this distance of time, and with the imperfect accounts that have come down to us, we should be liable to many errors did we attempt to portray those minor formalities that were practised in the state courts at the date of our narrative. The principal facts that came to light during the trial, are the only points on which we can speak with any thing like certainty.

Thus we pass in silence all the minor evidence that was produced to prove Elford's guilt: nothing was forgotten—the short sword, the cloak, the clothes, soiled and stained with blood; his agitation, his strange deportment, on the day of his arrest, were all things that helped to convict him, and all who were present but too plainly saw there was no chance for his escape, unless he could prove an alibi; so strong was the body of circumstantial evidence now pro-

duced against him : a species of evidence by which such cases must in general be judged ; since, so heinous is the crime, it seldom has any other than the searching eye of God to witness its commission.

CHAP. XXI.

Shylock. Most learned judge ! A sentence : come, prepare.

Portia. Tarry a little ; — there is something else.

SHAKSPEARE.

THE prosecution for the state being closed, the prisoner was called upon for his defence. Reginald Elford, as if roused by this summons to a sense of his situation, at first looked around him with surprise ; for so much had his feelings been wrought upon by the part Agnes had taken in his trial, that, from the moment she stood as a witness against him, till the present time, he had appeared lost to all but a consciousness of his own deep misery, and the utter hopelessness of his affections ; one thought, and one alone, having possessed his mind — the woman he loved would be the instrument of his destruction.

Recalled in some degree to a sense of what was due to his own honour and to the preserv-

ation of his life, his self-possession, and even his fortitude, returned to him. By a strong effort over his own feelings, he determined not to yield to this weakness, not to lose his life and his good name, by maintaining a silence that all men would interpret as a confession of his guilt. With a noble and elevated mien, and in accents that betrayed neither fear nor remorse, he looked around him ; and then fixing his calm eye upon the Judge, he pleaded his own cause with a bold and manly eloquence, dwelling with much force on the danger of trusting implicitly to circumstantial evidence, especially where there was no proof that the accused had, in any other instance, betrayed a disposition that was at all likely to commit the crime with which he was charged.

Elford spoke with modesty (yet with that warmth and zeal common to the young and the brave), when he alluded to his having borne arms in the service of the King with unblemished honour, during the war ; and he now asked if it was likely that he, who had done so, should at once tarnish his good name, by an act as

cowardly as it was atrocious. He did not affect to deny the feelings of jealousy which had prepossessed his mind against the deceased. He admitted that he considered him as a rival who acted a dishonourable part, in seeking to seduce from him the plighted affections of her he loved. To resent this injury, he allowed that he had sought to meet Radcliffe in arms: it might be wrong; he did not deny the sin of such an action; but surely it was an offence so common to the times, and to young men of his age and profession, that it would be most unjust to hold him guilty of murder because he had more than once challenged the deceased to individual combat.

No man there present, he averred, lamented the untimely death of that unfortunate gentleman more than he did; he regretted it the more, because Amias had perished before he (Elford) had found an opportunity of confessing, as every candid mind would do, the wrong he had done him by ill-grounded suspicions. Circumstances, since brought to light, had, indeed, convinced him that, so far from having

acted the part of a base rival, Radcliffe had performed one of generous friendship and manly forbearance, under feelings and circumstances of no common provocation. Yet this gentleman, so falsely suspected, so harshly judged, had died whilst he (Elford) entertained towards him sentiments of jealousy and anger that he now blushed to own. He grieved to the soul, as he thought of these things; and would now give that life he was so likely to lose on a false charge, could its sacrifice but obtain for him an opportunity to acknowledge and repair his errors towards the deceased.

So much for his own feelings: for the circumstances tending to prove that he had committed the fatal deed; they were, he allowed, on the first view of them, strangely framed and connected to make him appear as guilty. Yet none of them told so much against him as the evidence of the man commonly called Black Will, and the yeoman, who had both sworn to seeing him on the evening of the twentieth of June, skulking in a mysterious manner, and

evidently seeking to conceal his face and person, near the Tamerton oak.

“ My Lord,” continued Elford, “ I could prove, that on that night, at the hour the murder must have been committed, I was so many miles distant from the spot, that it was totally impossible the deceased should have met his death by my hand. I say I could prove this, my Lord ; but a higher duty, an obligation more sacred than that which I owe to my own life, or even to what is dearer to me — my good name — seals my lips in eternal silence. I will not save my own life by forfeiting the life of another. Drop by drop would I shed my blood amidst the tortures of the rack, rather than become a betrayer. I would beseech this court well to consider this part of my declaration. It is publicly known, my Lord, that I am a royalist : it is also well known that my father has lost all his fortune, his peace of mind, kindred and friends, in these most unnatural wars — whilst my poor mother fell ——”

Elford paused ; for this allusion to his mother’s fate, slight as it was, brought the tears

into his eyes: endeavouring to recover himself, he proceeded, though not in so firm a voice as before. “I am a royalist, and as such am connected with royalists who dare not always appear abroad without manifest danger to themselves and to their connections. I would ask you, therefore, but to suppose it might be possible, that, on that very night, I was in a place, and amongst persons, whom but to name, would be to betray; though it is possible, had I done so, at the price of life itself, they would have stepped forward, and have vindicated my innocence in the sight of all the world.

“The state of my apparel,” continued Elford, “of my sword, the agitation of my mind at the time I was seized, have all been brought forward against me. My Lord, I acknowledge that, on the evening of the twentieth of June, I was seeking a friend, who lies concealed, and in peril of his life: in my way to him, I encountered two persons, who watched my steps, as I doubted not, with an intention to trace out *his* retreat by my means. We quarrelled; blows followed; and one of those men I hurt in

the fray—but I think not dangerously. Who they were, I know not, though they declared themselves enemies to me, well knowing me as a royalist, who had before encountered them in a public field. They may have heard of my imprisonment, or they may not; but if they did hear of it, they were not likely persons to come forward, so as to save me from my present danger. One person, and only one person, could do it, and that with perfect safety, I trust, to himself; but, alas! I know not his name, nor where he may be found. The circumstance may appear extraordinary, but it is true; and I will now repeat it in this presence.”

A murmur ran through the court; the interruption was but momentary: silence being restored, Elford thus continued, while all present listened in profound attention to his narrative:—

“As I journeyed on the road I was going to Sheep’s Tor, many miles distant from Tamerton, and between the hours of eight and nine o’clock, two persons passed me, one of whom spoke a few words, that made me think if he proceeded

unprepared for it, that he, too, would be in danger from the very men from whom I had so lately escaped with extreme difficulty; and I had suspected others of the same party lurked not far from them. I stopped this person, whilst he was still speaking to his companion, and told him my fears; at the same time directing him towards a road that would enable him to avoid the men I believed to be his enemies as well as mine. He thanked me, and said that the warning was well timed, for I had by it, most likely, saved him from death, since I knew not the importance of the charge on which he was travelling. We parted, and as he bade me good night ——”

“The clock struck nine!” said some one in the crowded court, in a clear distinct voice.

“Who dares disturb the court?” said the judge. “Officers, take that man, whoever he be, into custody.”

“Not yet,” repeated the same voice: “I must first be heard.”

“Who dares thus disturb the solemnity of

a court of justice?" again said the judge, in an angry tone.

"I dare," repeated the same voice; and, making his way with a strong effort, through the press, Sir Hugh Piper presented before the assembly his bold, manly, and weather-beaten countenance, now glowing with honest zeal and with the exertion of hard riding (for he had ridden many a long mile since he mounted old Hector at the dawn of day, and was but that moment arrived): he now stood wiping his brows, and endeavouring to recover breath enough to speak, so as not to stumble or to pause in his narration.

So soon as he could command his voice and his feelings, he looked stedfastly on the prisoner at the bar, and said,—"Young man, do you know me? My voice you may remember: but scarcely, I think, my person: for when we met at the foot of Sheep's Tor, on the evening of the twentieth of June, it was somewhat dark; the church clock of that quiet little village told the hour."

"It did — it did," said Elford, as the sudden

joy occasioned by the appearance of the very witness who could prove the alibi to clear him of the charge of murder, overpowered his whole soul ; and bursting into tears, as he raised his hands, he sobbed hysterically, and cried aloud, —“ I thank thee, oh, my God ! thou hast sent me a deliverer ; I shall not die this death of shame.”

“ God *has* sent thee a deliverer, young man,” continued Sir Hugh Piper, “ and none but God. Let all listen, whilst I, in this open court, and in the solemn appeal of an oath to the Almighty Judge of heaven and earth to prove that I speak truth, tell my simple tale respecting those wondrous means by which it pleased the Father of truth and mercy, to call on me to deliver yonder prisoner.” The solemnity of manner, the energy with which these words were spoken, the sight of the hysterical joy that had burst from the prisoner, all moved the court to a feeling of the liveliest interest, and the judge ordered this new witness to be sworn without delay.

Sir Hugh Piper took the sacred volume in

his hand ; and having solemnly attested that he would speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, immediately commenced his deposition : —

“ On the evening of the twentieth of June,” said Sir Hugh, “ I was in company with my faithful servant and follower, Cornet Davy, on my road from a friend’s, who lives near Sheep’s Tor, where I had been on business of some moment. On that evening I had appointed to meet sundry gentlemen at Warleigh : it is now well known they were royalists ; I need not, therefore, conceal it, since their estates are likely to pay the penalty of that meeting, and well is it for them that they will get off thus easily.”

Here Sir Hugh was reminded that he was wandering from the subject of his evidence, which was simply, if he could do so, to prove the circumstances relating to the share he had taken in the affairs of Reginald Elford.

“ Pardon me, my lord judge, and you, gentlemen of the jury,” said Sir Hugh ; “ but you shall presently find that I am *not* rambling,

other than along the road at the foot of Sheep's Tor, where I was obliged to pass in my way from my friend's house, and where, observing no one near, I held discourse with the Cornet in somewhat too loud a voice, perhaps, had there been rogues near to listen. But in so lonely a place I thought none but the old granite rocks were about us, and they were not likely to prove eavesdroppers; at least not until they were converted into stone walls, which, according to the old saying, have ears of their own to listen. Well, then, my lord, this very meeting at Warleigh, which you but now called irrelevant matter, became the subject of discourse between me and the honest Cornet; I regretted that, ride as hard as I would, my horse would never carry me so far that night; and I was sorry for it, as I felt anxious to meet certain friends who would be there; and I was the more anxious, since I had been disappointed in one great object of my late journey, a thing that would involve the safety of those friends.

“Whilst I yet spoke to the Cornet,” continued Sir Hugh Piper, “a man who had, it

seemed, been resting under one of the old rocks, and was, therefore, hidden by its shadow, suddenly started up, and came forward. At first I thought him a highwayman, or some rascal who would take advantage of what he might have heard thus imprudently spoken by me. I laid my hand on the hilt of my sword, and the Cornet drew his weapon; but presently the supposed highwayman proved himself to be a friend; for, warning us *not* on any consideration to go thither that night, he told us certain circumstances which convinced me he knew the whole plan that had been agitated; and, moreover, he gave me the assurance that if we went forward that night to Warleigh, we should be betrayed. I thanked him, and told him that he had most probably saved me from imminent danger, since I travelled on a charge of much importance. I was about to ask his name; but having directed me to a certain path, in order that I might avoid some roundhead fellows with whom he had quarrelled, and from whom he had but recently escaped, he bade me suddenly a good night, and struck down a path amidst

the wild rocks—just at that moment the clock of the village church struck nine. Cornet Davy, as honest a man as ever appeared in any court, is even now in Lidford ; I left him at the little inn ; send for him, examine him on oath, and I will warrant his witness exactly tallies with my own.”

A murmur of satisfaction ran through the court ; Sir Hugh Piper paused a moment, and thus continued :—“ And now, my lord, and you, gentlemen of the jury, would you know how I came hither to give this evidence in favour of the prisoner, not knowing even the name of the man who was on his trial till I came into court, and never having (in consequence of long absence) till this day heard of his imprisonment, not having been summoned hither to give the very evidence which may save his life—I shall satisfy you by telling a tale that will astonish all who hear it : some may doubt its truth ; but I stand here, a man well known—and known, I trust, as an honest one, who would not utter falsehood. I have, in the solemnity of an oath, called on God to witness the

truth of my attestation, and I would not peril my own soul in violation of so sacred a pledge; I would not lie to the Judge of all the earth, though it were to gain a king's crown in peace."

On hearing this preface to what Sir Hugh Piper was about to communicate, all the court were filled with surprise, and an intense feeling of curiosity possessed every one present to know what the extraordinary circumstance could be that required such an introduction.

Silence being restored, Sir Hugh thus proceeded:—"Having, after the above-mentioned meeting at Sheep's Tor, been delayed on my road by the receipt of certain letters from the hands of a friend, instead of immediately returning home, I was obliged to retrace my steps as far as Exeter, and not till last night did I draw nigh to Plymouth, in the hope once more to be restored to my own family, from whom I had so long been kept absent. Our horses, however, or rather my horse—for Hector it was that gave in, being old and knocked up with the journey—could not proceed without rest; so we determined to put up at a small inn on

the road for the night, and on this very morning to rise with the lark and set on towards Plymouth. I retired to rest, as every Christian man ought to do, after having thanked God for the mercies of the day, and prayed for wholesome sleep and a continuance of blessings when I should again arise from my bed. There are few troubles that keep a man from sleep, if he be in good health and have a quiet conscience. My lord, and you, gentlemen of the jury, I trust you may ever enjoy as sound rest as I did last night for the first two or three hours.

“Towards morning, however,” continued Sir Hugh, after a moment’s pause, “I was visited by a remarkable dream, and that circumstance brought me hither.”

“A dream! a dream summons a witness into court!” was murmured and whispered throughout the assembly.

“Ay, truly, a dream did so,” said Sir Hugh Piper; “and it was after this manner:—I thought that I was alone amongst the rocks of Sheep’s Tor, and that it was evening; I was longing to be at home with my wife and daughter,

and made many attempts to get my horse forwards, for I fancied I was riding old Hector ; but he would not go — no, not an inch would he stir from the spot : when, all at once, from that very rock where, on the night of the twentieth of June, I had been warned by the young stranger not to go to Warleigh, I saw a figure standing, and beckoning to me — the figure, though bright, was scarcely one of substance like a human form ; it was shadowy and imperfect, or else I seemed to look upon it through a veil of mist. I was startled, but obeyed ; and the horse, which I thought trembled under me in every joint, bore me up within a few yards of the shining figure. It spoke these words in a tone of command, ‘ *Arise, and go to Lidford.*’ The horse, I thought, plunged as the figure addressed me : I started and awoke, and found myself in bed at the inn, with the first grey light of dawn peeping through the windows.

“ Again I turned on my pillow,” continued Sir Hugh, “ and again I slept ; again the vision passed before my sight, and the same words sounded in my dreaming ear. Once more I

awoke ; the lark was singing cheerily, and the dawn was blushing into day. Still I felt wearied, still I cried, ‘ yet a little sleep, yet a little slumber, yet a little folding of the hands to sleep.’ But my dream came a third time ; and a third time the command of some power, more potent than that of earthly kings, bade me *Arise, and go to Lidford*. I started at once from my bed, convinced that this solemn visitation, this awful mandate was, indeed, from God ; and I would obey it. As I arose, the sun was shining bright in the heavens ; the birds were singing with a thousand throats, and all was beauty and harmony without. I sank on my knees, and prayed God to guide me in safety to fulfil his purpose, whatever that might be, though it was yet wrapped in mystery to me. To Lidford I came, without an object, without a plan ; and going into an inn to refresh our horses, we heard there was a trial going forward, on a charge of murder ; curiosity prompted me to stroll down to the court ; as I entered, the prisoner rose and commenced his defence. To what followed, you, my lord, and all the court are witnesses :

God has delivered yonder gentleman by making me his instrument ; though not till that night did I ever see his face, when in the dusk I could not be said to see it plainly ; nor did I know, till I heard his name casually mentioned in this court, that yonder prisoner was *Reginald Elford*, who long since at Exeter, when I was *not* there, won my daughter's heart, and would have had my consent to wed her, but for the times, and his own father's misfortunes, which seemed to stand in the way of Sir Marmaduke Elford's consent to the marriage. The danger in which yonder young gentleman stood, as a persecuted royalist, prevented his seeking a personal interview with me at Plymouth, at the time I first learnt tidings of his suit to my child. Thus did we remain unknown to each other, saving by her report."

To describe the sensations which this narrative produced in court would be impossible. Reginald Elford was so much overpowered with gratitude, wonder, and joy, that he could not at first utter his feelings ; but, in a few moments, recovering the power of speech, and for-

getful of all else (excepting those out-pourings of the heart in grateful adoration of his Maker, who had thus wonderfully rescued him from shame and death), he sank on his knees in the open court, and loudly and fervently magnified God, for the mercies thus vouchsafed to him a sinful creature, though innocent of the particular crime with which he stood charged.

A burst of honest joy, the effect of the general sympathy, for this great and striking deliverance, broke forth; the judge was deeply moved, and joined in the common acknowledgment that the hand of the Almighty was, indeed, visible in this vindication of the innocent. He shed tears of joy; as the men of the law (little accustomed to let their firmness be shaken by any emotions that might arise from the circumstances of the case) now caught the infection of sympathy, and joined with all the rest in a spontaneous tribute of thanks and praise; a feeling which softened every heart, elevated every mind, and broke forth in accents of uncontrolled gratulation, as kindness seemed to animate every honest breast.

The Cavaliers triumphed; and even the round-heads and fanatics forgot that it was a royalist and a Church-of-England man, who was thus snatched from ignominy and death ; some went even so far as to compare the circumstance to the dream, by which “ the angel of the Lord spake unto Jacob.” Others said it was like the dream of Joseph, that preserved him alive and gained for him favour in the house of Pharaoh. And Daniel’s dream was not forgotten ; nor, in short, any one dream that had ever been recorded in Scripture, and could now be brought forward — if applicable or not—in reference to dreams, as being the immediate intimation or revelation of the Divine will.

Some, also, present remembered the remarkable dream of the court page, which had warned the celebrated Duke of Buckingham of his danger : but Buckingham was incredulous,—he laughed at a dream ; and totally disbelieving the warning thus conveyed to him, in a few days after fell a victim to the knife of the assassin Felton.

CHAP. XXII.

—— I charge you by the law,
Whereof you are a well-deserving pillar,
Proceed to judgment. SHAKSPEARE.

It was some time before the tumult of joy and wonder, that had so completely upset the customary observance of order and silence in the court, could subside, so as to allow the business of the day to go forward.

The judge was the first person, who, subduing his own feelings, now called on the attention of the court, and prepared to sum up the evidence with the utmost brevity, and to direct an acquittal of the prisoner. Ere he could do so, a second disturbance amongst the crowd for a moment obliged him to desist; and turning his eyes towards the place whence it arose, he was about to command silence, when his attention was arrested by a scene so extraordinary that every circumstance of it excited the deepest interest throughout the assembly.

An elderly man, wrapped in a cloak, and wearing a slouched hat, was (in company with a respectable and middle-aged gentlewoman, and a little girl, whom she led by the hand) earnestly endeavouring to force his way into court, whilst the officers in attendance attempted to keep him back. They succeeded in detaining the old man; but the woman, more active, and possibly having been less roughly handled, pushed swiftly past, rushed forward, raised the child who was with her in her arms, and exclaimed in a voice, whose high intonations and energy electrified all the court, "You have heard the DREAM, now hear the WITNESS."

From the extraordinary manner in which this person had rushed into the assembly, her agitated appearance, her raising the little girl in her arms, and the wild tones in which she uttered so strange an exclamation, altogether induced many present to conclude that she was some mad woman, whose mind, more than usually disturbed by what was going on, had worked upon its own feelings till she fancied herself

called upon to take some part in the busy events of the day. An officer in attendance went up to her, and was about to force her to retire; but she shook off his hold in a moment; and raising the little girl's arm, showed to all the court that the child held the sheath of a dagger in her hand. She looked at the girl with a strong expression of earnestness and affection, as she said, "Mary, my child, speak the truth — God sees you."

The child, animated and encouraged by these words of her mother, looked round, and all felt surprised and interested by the uncommon beauty and innocence of her appearance. She seemed about eight years old: her complexion was of the liveliest and most delicate hues; her hair hung clustered in ringlets bright as gold, and her eye was clear and blue as the softest tints of a summer sky. Such was the child: she looked steadily round, till her eye caught the object of her search; and then in a voice, and with a manner that betrayed some fear, yet not unmingled with a degree of resolution that could scarcely be expected from one of

her tender years, she held out her hand, and pointing with the sheath of the dagger to Sir John Copplestone, as he sat in the court, exclaimed — “ There is the man who did the murder ! ”

The astonishment, the confusion, the alarm which this sudden accusation produced, baffles all description ; for Copplestone, thus unexpectedly charged with the crime of murder, appeared to be at once overwhelmed by the horror of his feelings. He seemed as if stunned by a sudden blow that had deprived him almost of sense as well as motion ; for whilst in the act of rising from his seat, and attempting to pass forward, his head became dizzy, and he would have fallen to the ground but for the support of those around him.

As he thus stood drawing his breath with pain, his eye fixed itself on the sheath of the dagger which the child held in her hand. It was a thing too well known to be mistaken, being the sheath of that very weapon which had descended to him from ancient times, and had belonged to one of his ancestors ; a knight commonly,

known by the name of the “white-spur Copplestone;” this knight having been allowed (as a mark of honour for some distinguished act of gallantry in the lists) at all times to wear silver spurs—the silver or white spur was beautifully represented in chased work on the sheath now in the hand of the little girl; and many persons in court, who had long known Sir John Copplestone, must have often seen him wear it, as the dagger it had contained was, till very lately, his favourite and usual weapon.

As his mind rested on this silent witness—for so it might be called—the paleness of death stole over his dark features; his lips looked as livid as those of a corpse; a slight convulsion shook his hardy frame; and his quivering eye (which seemed as if chained by fascination, and to have no power to withdraw itself from the fatal sheath) at last closed for an instant, weary with gazing, and glad to shut out the sight of so terrible an object. Again he opened his eyes, and looking up towards heaven, till nothing but the whites remained visible, seemed in utter despair at his condition. Large drops

of sweat fell from his cheeks, and stood in bubbles on his brow; so extreme was his mental agony, so entire the prostration of his courage, at a blow thus sudden and thus public: all his spirit appeared at once to die within him, and he stood conscience-struck; silent, self-convicted, a condemned murderer on the attestation of a child.

There was not one person present (though yet knowing nothing of the circumstances) who did other than consider him as guilty. He was ordered into custody, without the doubt or pause of a moment. This was easily accomplished; for as if the fiend who had so long served Copplestone, had now at once deserted and abandoned him to his fate, the miserable man appeared not only to have lost all physical power, but all presence of mind, energy, or hope—all was lost; so that the little girl who stood as his accuser before the court, might, with her feeble hand, have made him captive, had he meditated or attempted an escape.

Copplestone secured, the extraordinary circumstances of the case were such as to demand

instant attention; and the judge, who was as anxious to detect the guilty as he had been to free the innocent, determined, though somewhat out of rule, himself to examine the intelligent but infantine witness, who was thus made an instrument in the hand of Heaven to bring guilt to light and justice.

With much gentleness and tenderness, yet with a solemnity of manner that was calculated deeply to impress the young mind (on whose truth life or death was depending) with a sense of awe as to the duty she was about to perform, the judge commenced by asking her many questions, in order to ascertain how far she was sensible of the solemn obligation of an oath. His lordship had previously learned that the little girl's name was Mary Raleigh, and that she was the only surviving child of the unfortunate Doctor Raleigh, late chaplain to the King.

“Know you, child,” said the judge, “the nature of an oath, and the punishment that is due to false swearing? Do you love and fear God?”

“ I know,” answered the little girl, “ that God made me, and all the world ; and that if I am good, and love my mother, he will make me happy now, and very happy when I die ; but that if I tell stories, I shall be punished as the wicked are.”

“ And how are they punished, think you, my little maiden ?” continued her interrogator.

“ By being given up to the devil and his spirits,” answered the child, “ and becoming miserable for ever with him.”

“ And who taught you these things, my dear ?” continued the judge.

“ My father, sir,” she replied, “ when he was alive ; but he is dead now, and I learn them all from my mother.”

“ You remember your father, then ?”

“ Oh yes, I remember I used to sit on his lap, as he would talk to me and kiss me ; and sometimes I used to stand upon his knees, and play with his white hairs — for he was an old man ; a great deal older than my mother, for she has no white hairs like him.”

“ Have you been taught to pray to God ?”

said the judge, who was anxious by these questions to form an opinion, by her answers, if she might be considered a competent witness on so serious a charge.

“ I have been taught to pray to God to bless me, sir, and to make me a good child, and to say the Lord’s prayer and the creed, and to pray for the King and my spiritual teachers, pastors, and masters.”

“ There has been no want of teaching, in sooth,” said the judge; “ and now tell me what you consider to be the nature of an oath—an oath to God, my little maiden?”

“ I call upon him,” answered the child, with surprising quickness, and with an expression of reverence that showed she had early been impressed with the fear and worship due to her Creator, “ I call upon him to see me tell the truth in what I say; and as God sees me always when I’m awake, or when I’m asleep, he would be sure to know if I told stories, and to punish me for it: and his angels would no more stand about my bed, as they always do to take care of good children.”

“It is enough,” said the Judge; “you have understanding and knowledge enough to render your testimony valid. Let the oath be administered to yonder child.”

The oath was administered; and with a simplicity of manner the most engaging, and an intelligence far beyond her years, Mary told her tale. “Wicked people,” she said, “wanted to take up her poor mother for a witch; and so her mother and herself were to go away to a friend, that they might not be sent to prison. Before they left the house, she (Mary) was to look out and see if any body might be about to hinder their going away. She did as she was bid, and looked around her, keeping under the hedge that she might not be observed. As she did so, she saw some one run towards the Tamerton oak; and though it was dusk, she knew very well who it was, and that the person who came running along was Master Amias Radcliffe.”

The child was here closely questioned as to her knowledge of Radcliffe.

She replied, “she knew him quite well, be-

cause he had once given her a piece of silver money with a hole in it, and she had worn it round her neck ever since; and she had often seen him ride by since then; when he would sometimes stop his horse and get off and play with her, or bring her toys in his pockets. She was close under the hedge; and as her mother had charged her not to speak to any body, and not to be seen if she could help it, she had stood quite still; for she soon saw another person come running up after Master Amias Radcliffe, and he seized him by the cloak; and she knew that other person to be Sir John Copplestone, as she had seen him ride by her mother's door almost every day."

She was now interrogated as to what she heard pass; and declared that she heard Sir John say, "Give me up the papers you have stolen from my cabinet,—my red velvet cabinet:" she was sure he said those very words, and she thought Master Amias seemed to say he would not; for he resisted, and so Sir John Copplestone began to handle him roughly, and Amias struggled to get away, and bitter names did

they call each other. They both fell down in the quarrel, and then Coplestone rose up and put his foot on Radcliffe as he lay on the ground; and then Sir John, as if he were mazed, tore out his dagger, and struck it into Radcliffe once or twice, who groaned, as he lay under the oak tree. This was all she knew, excepting that in Sir John's passion to drag out the dagger the sheath flew towards her, and struck her as she stood under the shadow of the hedge that was not far off. She was dreadfully frightened, but caught hold of the sheath, and ran away with it as fast as she could to her mother. She did not know if Sir John Coplestone saw her or not, as she ran close under the hedge upon the turf by the side of the bank."

This evidence being closed, Mistress Raleigh was next sworn. Her deposition merely went to prove the fact of the child's running home in a dreadful state of alarm; so much so, that she had fallen into a swoon, and on recovering was so exceedingly agitated, that it was some time before she could repeat all the circumstances to which she had been a witness. Mistress Raleigh,

alarmed not only for her own life, but for that of her child (who she feared would be in danger, should it but be suspected by Copplestone that Mary had witnessed the fatal deed), hastened from her own house, and sought shelter from the threatened danger amidst the deep glens of Lidford, where she had indeed found a friend. She did not know of the danger of Reginald Elford till on that very day, when one of her companions in distress informed her of it, and an elderly person, then in court, had borne her company from Lidford. She now came forward at her own peril, in order that her dearest child might prove the guilt of Sir John Copplestone, and save the innocent, thus falsely accused of murder.

All eyes were now turned on the real murderer; and the little girl, whose evidence had brought the deed to light, was compared to the child Samuel, who was called upon by the Lord himself to do his will. And, however inapplicable might be the comparison, the scriptural illustration was not forgotten of the little maid being chosen to do a great work, when she bid

Naaman arise and wash in the river Jordan. This was the more particularly insisted upon by the godly, as a proof how often little maids became chosen instruments to fulfil the commands of the Almighty.

So wholly were the faculties of Copplestone subdued, and even his feelings deadened for the time, by the stunning effects of the shock he had so unexpectedly received, that he was soon after led out of court, to close imprisonment, in Lidford Castle, without seeming conscious of his fate. Copplestone was, in fact, in a state of suffering which appeared likely to deprive him of reason, and even of life.

As the officers of the civil law attempted to raise him, for he had sunk down on a seat, in order to lead him out, he pointed to his throat, and they immediately gave him relief by unbuttoning his collar and loosening his falling bands, for he appeared as if in danger of suffocation. This done, he recovered breath, looked slowly round, but with a vacancy that seemed to indicate a total insensibility to all outward objects and things; till, at length, his

eye resting upon the fatal sheath, a groan of agony burst from his bosom, and he rushed forward with the gesture of a madman, as he was hurried from the court, closely followed by those officers of justice whose place it was to see him held in strict custody.

Reginald Elford was liberated by order of the Judge. No sooner had he quitted the bar, where he had stood a prisoner, than the old man who had borne Mistress Raleigh company, came forward, and throwing his arms round the neck of Reginald, cried out, in a tone of voice, that went to every heart, “ My son ! my son ! and was it to save me, who am so old and worthless, that you would have died this day ? ”

It was Sir Marmaduke Elford who spoke ; and now turning to the assembly, he thus continued : — “ This dutiful son, on the evening of the twentieth of June, sought me sorrowing. He came to me in a wilderness, amidst rude and savage rocks, where I had fled to save life — for, if taken by my enemies, I knew what would be my fate. He might this day have called

on me to prove his innocence, but he deemed such an act would betray me; and thus would he rather have died, as a common felon, than have perilled my grey hairs. But God would not suffer the innocent to perish. The Widow Raleigh warned me of his trial; and hither did we come in the hope to save him, though by doing so both our lives stand endangered."

"I trust not," said the humane Judge; "no one here present can have witnessed the wonderful transactions of this day unmoved. Sir Marmaduke Elford, though I differ from you in public opinions, yet I know you to be a brave and most unfortunate man; I will endeavour to serve you, and to obtain for you that mercy which has been shown to many of the misguided royalists: the widow, too, and her little girl, shall not be forgotten. They shall be taken care of; they are both material witnesses against Sir John Copplestone, who now stands committed on a charge of murder."

The Judge, as he concluded this address, beckoned to an officer, to whom he spoke in a low voice, as he gave him several orders.

Reginald Elford, ere he left the court, bowed respectfully to the bench, and expressed his sense of the fair and impartial manner in which the proceedings had been conducted throughout the day ; and he thanked the Judge for the kindness he had promised to show to his father, with a warmth that proved the grateful and dutiful feelings of his heart : “ His father’s life,” he said, “ was far more dear to him than his own.”

“ My life !” exclaimed Sir Marmaduke Elford, whose melancholy spirit was seldom long at rest — “ my life ! what is it but a feeble flame that is daily wasting to its close ; and why should you wish its continuance ? I have lived to see my dearest hope laid in the tomb : I have lived to see my king, whose days I had hoped would have passed as peacefully as did those of Asa, when war was not in the land ; yet have I lived to see him — mild, generous, and good as he has ever been — driven with scorn, worse than scorpions’ stings, from the throne. The stings of ingratitude have chased him from his high place, and he is now a pri-

soner ! and the wicked hold him in derision ; and those whose fathers he would have disdained to set with the dogs of his flock, have thrust themselves in and become as shepherds to the fold. Oh ! these are fearful visitations ; evil days are come about me with the sorrow of my gray hairs. Why should I desire life, when my hopes are but as a morning cloud, and as the early dew which passeth away ?”

Whilst poor old Sir Marmaduke thus deplored the loss of his honours, and of his happiness, in a voice of deep feeling, and in a strain of expression that he had caught from his constant study of the Scriptures, many of the bystanders could not help comparing him to Job, the tried and faithful servant of God, whose miseries were only exceeded by his patience. All men pitied him ; and, as old, heart-broken, and bending with age and the effects of his late concealment amongst the damp and wild rocks, he leaned on his son’s arm and tottered out of court, many of the bystanders called down blessings on his head, and wished that those

white hairs might, even yet, go down to the grave in honour and in peace.

The old man, deeply affected by these proofs of generous sympathy for his misfortunes, wiped away a tear from his eye that had started unbidden, and speaking to those who stood near him, said, — “ Thank you, friends ; thank you ! there is comfort in the prayers and pity of good men like yourselves. Yet in lamenting what I have lost, let me not be unthankful for what remains — this dear son, who even but now would have died to save me : God will bless him.”

These words were spoken with emphasis, as Sir Marmaduke wrung his son by the hand, and fixed his eye, now for a moment bright, with wistful affection on his face. Those who stood near caught the strong feeling of sympathy, and the father’s blessing, thus emphatically bestowed, was echoed from a hundred tongues, as the reward of filial piety so well deserved ; and “ May God bless your son ! ” sounded in the ears of the old Sir Marmaduke, like the voice of melody ; so soothing, so wel-

come to him, were those blessings, that he retired from the court in a far less melancholy mood than he had been in for some time, during his late and severe distresses both of body and mind.

CHAP. XXIII.

Let no man trust the first false step
Of guilt ; it hangs upon a precipice,
Whose steep descent in last perdition ends.

YOUNG.

By order of the court, the red velvet cabinet of Sir John Copplestone was searched ; all his private papers seized, and examined with the utmost circumspection. As it is not our intention here to enter minutely into the details of that examination (the result of which was, by one discovery affording a clue to another, a complete exposure of the iniquities of Copplestone's life), we shall content ourselves with merely stating the outline of facts, thus unfolded and brought to light in a manner that left no doubt as to their infamy.

By letters, documents, and deeds, discovered in the cabinet, it appeared that the late Sir Walter Radcliffe, father of Amias, during the

time of his losses in the West Indies, had been induced to mortgage his house and lands of Warleigh to Sir John Copplestone. Sir Walter, however, never felt easy till he could redeem his family estate; and coming into some property on the death of a distant relation, he had been desirous to acquit himself of his obligation to Copplestone. This Sir John constantly evaded; possibly under the pretext of not wishing to press the settlement upon Sir Walter, at a time when he had just received a little property to enable him once more to raise himself in the world.

This part of the business, however, could not be clearly understood by those who examined Copplestone's papers; for many had been, no doubt, purposely destroyed; and, therefore, many were wanting to render some parts of the transaction at all intelligible. It appeared, however, by certain documents most carefully preserved, that unless the estate of Warleigh was redeemed by Christmas Day in the year 1629, it became forfeited to Copplestone. One drawer of the red velvet cabinet was found

empty; it had most likely contained the very mortgage deed of the estate, that Dame Gee *afterwards* confessed she had stolen out and given to Radcliffe; many of Sir John Copplestone's secrets and unjust proceedings towards his godson having become known to her by means of letters found by her in the doublet of Grace-on-High Gabriel, just before his death. Gabriel had long acted as a confidential agent to Copplestone.

The magistrates who examined these papers, found, also, the will of the late Sir Walter Radcliffe: it was a most extraordinary document; being dated only on the very day Sir Walter had died of his wounds, and the handwriting of his name bearing every appearance of constraint or force; possibly some one might have guided the pen placed in the hand of the dying man who wrote it. By this document, Sir John Copplestone was nominated guardian of Amias Radcliffe, the only son of the testator. Sir John was likewise named the sole executor of this last will and testament; and Sir Walter declared in it that he had no power whatever

over Warleigh, as it had become forfeited to Copplestone. This assertion, contradicted by the few but suspicious papers now found (tending to prove that Sir Walter had expressed himself willing to redeem the mortgage), threw suspicion on the authenticity of the will altogether; and the forced writing of the signature, with the circumstance of Black Will, Grace-on-High Gabriel, and another person of suspicious character, having been the witnesses to it, all so much increased these doubts, respecting the validity of the transaction, that Black Will, the only surviving witness, was taken into custody without delay.

After his arrest, other circumstances came to light that made so much against him, that he felt seriously alarmed for his own safety; especially as Dame Gee had come forward, from motives of revenge to Copplestone, and had given up every paper she had found in the doublet of Gabriel. One of these was a letter from Copplestone, mentioning Black Will, as a stout fellow, who had never failed him, and who twenty years before had done him the best ser-

vice that he had ever found from the hand of man.

There was certainly nothing in the above-named passage of the letter to convict Sir John Coplestone's servant; but Black Will heard an exaggerated account of it in his prison, and of the suspicions to which it had given rise in the minds of the magistrates: the wicked, also, be it remembered, are always cowards, and are often the first to convict themselves by their own guilty fears. So was it now with this villain. In order to save himself, he offered to turn evidence against his master, if his own life might be spared.

On the first examination he deposed, that Sir John Coplestone, many years ago, had set him to lead on a party, under a promise of high reward, to rob both Sir Walter Radcliffe, and himself (Coplestone), at a certain spot near the moors, on the Christmas Eve of the year 1629. His purpose for devising this robbery was in order to deprive Sir Walter of the means to redeem the estate of Warleigh, according to agreement, before the Christmas

Day, when, if not redeemed, it would become completely forfeited to Copplestone.

At the time the transaction was to take place respecting the redemption of the property, Sir Walter Radcliffe had not exactly a sum sufficient of his *own* to complete the payment; but he was to ride to a friend's house with Sir John Copplestone, as that friend had promised to lend Sir Walter enough to make up the whole sum, so as to secure the estate from forfeiture under the mortgage deed. Black Will farther deposed, that he had joined a gang of desperate deer-stalkers, under pretext of leading them on to rob his own master (but, in fact, with the intent to rob Sir Walter), making them promise to share equally what they could get by the robbery; but to do no one any bodily harm; threats only were to be used: for Copplestone had given him no orders to take away Sir Walter Radcliffe's life; the real object of the whole affair being only to rob him of his money, so as to prevent — what Copplestone dreaded — the payment of the mortgage in time to save the lands from their forfeiture.

It had not been expected that Sir Walter Radcliffe would make any resistance, as the assailants were three to one in point of numbers; but Sir Walter did resist, and that desperately. He killed one man, and would have despatched another, so that the robbers were obliged to shoot him in their own defence; and they were the more hurried on to do this act, because, unfortunately, Sir Walter called out to one of them by his name. The wounded gentleman did not die on the spot; but was brought home to Warleigh, by Copplestone's order, in a dying state; and there no one was allowed to see him, as he lay between life and death, but such persons as Sir John chose to let pass into his chamber. The will was Copplestone's own drawing up; Grace-on-High Gabriel had made the dying man sign it. He (Black Will) believed Sir John was sorry that Sir Walter's crying out had obliged the robbers to fire at him.

Such was the confession of Black Will; but it must be acknowledged, that though we have endeavoured to tell the melancholy tale as

clearly as the intricate nature of the circumstances would admit, Will told it with many and repeated contradictions, often denying to-morrow what he had averred to be truth to-day. Sometimes he said that Sir John Copplestone had commanded him to join a gang of fellows in the robbery, who were at that time haunting the neighbourhood for no other purpose than to get rid of Sir Walter Radcliffe on the first opportunity. At others, Black Will would declare that Grace-on-High Gabriel was employed with that intent: but, however contradictory Will might be in these statements, he constantly admitted that both Gabriel and himself were present at the commission of the deed; and that he did not know but what Sir Walter Radcliffe would have been spared, if he had not called one of the ruffians by his name.

We shall conclude this chapter with stating, that on the twenty-eight day of October, in the year 1647, Sir John Copplestone of Warleigh was tried for the murder of his godson and ward, Amias Radcliffe: the trial took place in

Lidford Castle; the principal evidence against him being that of the child, who was but eight years old. The sheath of the dagger was also recognised as having been his, and was sworn to by several persons; nor did the prisoner affect to deny it; and allowed it was a family relic much valued by all who had borne the name and honours of Copplestone.

On the trial, in support of the charge of *malice aforethought*, Black Will deposed that he had heard his master direct Gabriel, before he left England, never to let his godson, Amias, return alive from the West Indies; as he feared (since Radcliffe had declined to marry Gertrude,—a marriage which he judged would have hushed up matters, and have prevented all future enquiry), that, on Radcliffe's coming of age, an hour *would* arrive when he (Sir John Copplestone) would be called upon for the settlement of all those long accounts which stood in fearful array against him.

After a full and impartial trial, Copplestone was found guilty of the crime of murder on the

body of his godson, Amias Radcliffe ; the sentence of death passed upon him according to law ; and, without a hope of pardon, he was re-conducted to the cells of guilt and misery in Lidford Castle.

CHAP. XXIV.

Priest, spare thy words : I add not to my sins
That of presumption, in pretending now
To offer up to Heaven the forced repentance
Of some short moments, for a life of crimes.

JOANNA BAILLIE.

SIR JOHN COPPLESTONE lay in Lidford Castle under sentence of death in a fearful state of suffering ; conscience in him had long slumbered, but it was now awakened by his coming fate with terrific force ; so that, as it was with the cruel Nero—who, after the unnatural murder of his mother, was perpetually followed by imaginary fiends—the horrors of his mind pursued him like shadows, which could alone be lost by flying into darkness and the shadow of death ! and there “ what dreams might come,” was, indeed, a thought that shook, even to its inmost recesses, that stubborn heart which had so long braved God in deeds of wickedness.

The retributive justice of Heaven is more fre-

quently seen in this world than the inconsiderate are at first disposed to believe. When, as in the present instance, the blow struck at another recoils upon the murderer, and those who have been the base tools and instruments of guilt become its witnesses and its betrayers, who but in these things must see the hand of God? when, as it were, the very image of the crime becomes evident in its chastisement. How often to the good has a prison been, with all its misery and gloom, as a temple of peace, a region of light and hope! whilst to the bad it is all darkness; having no light but what is of hell, whose fires already glare upon the conscience.

Such was the dungeon of Lidford Castle to Sir John Copplestone. He was most miserable—so miserable, that even for him might virtue and piety drop a pitying tear, for he dared not hope in God. Extended on straw, his face buried in it as in a pillow, his arms outstretched, his hands clenched, his hair hanging matted and disordered about his dishonoured head; he lay like Cain, the murderer's curse

fixed upon him, uttering groans of agony, but no prayer; calling on death to hide him, yet fearing to pass his great dread portal, which opens no more, should the path that the affrighted soul must tread be that which leads down to destruction.

But even in this state, charity did not forsake him. Charity, as a pitying angel, sought the cell of guilt and misery, and she came in the breast of God's own minister of truth; for Hezekiah (who sought out scenes of misery, in the hope to afford relief, as eagerly as worldlings do those of festivity and pleasure) entered the prison-house, and stood before the wretched criminal, ere he was conscious that a fellow being was near him.

For some moments the good man could not speak; on seeing the prostrate state of Copplestone, on hearing the groans that burst from him, he paused, shocked and overpowered by thus witnessing the extreme of human suffering, as the consequence of the extremity of human guilt. Folding his hands together, and raising his eyes to heaven, he fervently and mentally

prayed God to give him such a portion of his holy spirit, that he might command words that should rouse from this fatal apathy the miserable creature before him; so that he might seek even yet, though at the eleventh hour, the throne of mercy.

At length he spoke; and Copplestone, starting from his straw, raised his disordered head and looked around him like one who is distracted; his wild and bloodshot eye straining itself with an intense gaze, as if he would read in the countenance of Hezekiah the purport of his visit. "Do you come to bring me a pardon?" he said, for his thoughts had been wandering that way.

"I hope so," said Hezekiah mildly. "Pardon and peace; for both are of God, and both are promised to true penitence. Oh! do not, do not, as you love your own soul, neglect so great a mercy!"

"There is none forme —none for me," cried Copplestone, in an impatient tone of desperation; "I will not — I cannot repent."

"Hush!" cried Hezekiah, "breathe not

such a sound, entertain not such a desperate thought ; for it is a suggestion that comes alone from hell. You have a proud spirit ; proud, I fear, as that of Pharoah when he defied the witness of God by his servant Moses ; yet was there one thing prouder still than he — the sea, the vast deep, that rose even at the breath of God ; and in the mighty swellings of its terrific waves, made that proud king, and all his hosts, as nothing. Be not such as he, or God will overwhelm thee, indeed, with the waters of affliction. Hear me, and despair not : take this book — it is the Bible ; I will read comfort from it to thee ; I will pray by thee day and night, till I touch thy hard heart, and teach thee to pity thy ownself : I will wait here, lie here, wash these hard stones with my tears, so that I may but save a soul alive.”

Copplestone wept.

“ Oh, blessed sight ! ” said Hezekiah, “ precious drops are those, if they but drop as do showers to nourish the earth, to soften thy hard heart to some relenting. Hail them — cherish them — make thine eyes as fountains of bitter

waters, and they shall wash away thy crime. I will pray by thee ; nay, more, an angel shall bear us company—or one who is like to an angel—even thy virtuous and afflicted daughter ; for surely woman, lovely in her innocence, and acceptable in her piety and duty to God and man, resembles those pure spirits of a higher world. Wilt thou see her ? Thy daughter waits without.”

“ My child ! my Gertrude ! ” said Copplestone, “ I dare not see her : she will curse me, look on me with scorn, and ask what she has done that a criminal should be her father ! No, let me die ; leave me to death and misery ; but add not to these sufferings, a father’s shame, to see his child blush for his guilt, and rise up to reprove it.”

“ She will not,” exclaimed Hezekiah ; “ she will not ; she will pray for its forgiveness.”

“ Will she ? ” said Copplestone ; “ will she not reproach me ? I cannot, dare not pray for myself ; but she may pray for me ; there is comfort in the thought ;—her pure spirit, poured forth in prayer, may bring down some mercy

on this ruined head, this broken heart. I will see her — bring her hither.”

“ Hezekiah left the cell, and returned, leading in Gertrude, whose tottering steps could scarcely support her to go through the trial she deemed it her duty to perform — a last interview with her miserable father. She could not speak ; tears, deep sobs, choked her utterance, and she fell at his feet, wringing her hands in all the agony of unutterable grief.

Copplestone drew back ; he seemed as if fearful to touch her, so dreadful did the presence of his child — of the only thing he had ever loved on earth — appear to him at this moment, when he stood before her as one convicted of guilt.

“ Take her away !” he said ; “ take her away ! I have ruined her ; made her miserable as myself ; covered her innocent brow with shame ; made her a mark that all men may avoid her, as they cry out — There is the murderer’s daughter !”

“ Oh ! my father, talk not thus,” said Gertrude, making a strong effort to speak with

some composure : “ welcome be shame, welcome death, so I might but find you reconciled to God ! My father, do not shun me ; I am your daughter, still your daughter ; though you should be covered tenfold with crimes, I will not desert you in guilt or in death. Hear me : I was once a child ; you know how often I did acts that you blamed me for ; but on my sorrow and confession of them, you would open your arms to me again, and forgive me. Even so is it with God, the Father of us all. The gate of heaven, though fast locked, will open wide at the call of penitence ; seek it, then, and be comforted.”

“ Yet death will come,” said Copplesstone ; “ with me there can be no repenting and living, to live better than before. Oh ! death is terrible to all, but most is he the lord of fear, when the pale horse that bears him, armed with the terrors of the law, comes swiftly on, whilst mercy may not lift hand or eye, but bids him pass forward, because of justice.”

“ You see only the fear, and not the hope,” said Hezekiah : “ it is not that your penitence

alone could save you ; but God has made it a condition of your acceptance with the Redeemer of mankind. Aaron's rod was placed in the sanctuary, and there it blossomed and became beautiful in verdure and in fruit ; it flourished not from its own virtue, but by God's spirit ; even so does he bring forth, from the most worthless, the beautiful blossoms of penitence and hope."

Sir John Copplestone did not seem to hear this last address made to his feelings, so entirely was he wrapped up in the consciousness of the misery of his fate. " It is," he continued — " it is a fearful thing to be cut off by the hand of public justice ! to be made a spectacle to every vulgar eye, to every hardened heart, who judge the crime by its chastisement. To stand thus, all men gazing on me, as they shoot out their lips in scorn, point with the finger, and cry — See the criminal ! This, this is dishonour ; this is the bitterness of death, indeed — the foretaste of hell ; for mockery is the sport of fiends. To stand thus ; to be gazed on thus. Oh ! death, death in the field, by

flood or fire, torture, or slow and lingering misery — death in any shape, come it from God or man, if the bolt of Heaven strikes him to the ground, or the rack tear out his soul in agony — were merciful to this. I will not die as a criminal !”

“ You shall not, my father,” said Gertrude ; “ fly to God, and die with him as a penitent. Do not thus look away from me ; let me kneel and pray to you : I will weary Heaven with my prayers till you find mercy, so you will but join with me to seek it. I know the terror of your mind ; but it is not stronger than God’s power : think of his power, the Lord of heaven and earth — the Father of salvation. I know we must all feel, we ought to feel, his chastening hand ; else are we stubborn children to his will — when our honour is taken from us, we must blush for it. When the palaces of the mighty are shaken, and the pillars of their pride fall to the earth — when the moon shall be darkened and turned into blood, as the stars in their magnitude have no more light — who but must tremble ? Yet who but must

then hope, if they have anchored on the rock of ages."

"Hear her," said Hezekiah; "she speaks with the tongue of truth. A pious daughter breathes at her father's feet the gracious words of the promise; receive them as you would an angel's song; raise her up, clasp her to thy bosom, and have but one heart, one hope, one prayer—and let all be in God. He is all merciful—mercy is his last, best attribute. He commenced in mercy when he made man; wrath was a second thing; and yet even when man found out the way to his own destruction, God did not forsake his creature, but found mercy to redeem him."

Copplestone was softened by this appeal to his feelings; he clasped Gertrude to his bosom, and wept as he folded her to his embrace, saying, "My child! my child, canst thou forgive me?"

"It is not mine to forgive," replied Gertrude; "God's law has been broken, and he alone can pardon it;—seek him for forgiveness, not a creature frail in mortality, and having no

strength, even to support this bitter hour, but what is from Him."

"I am glad to see this," said Hezekiah ; "cherish these feelings that soften the heart and lead to penitence. Thy very tears, if of righteous sorrow, are from heaven. They are as the sweet showers that fall pattering down to nourish the spring born blossoms that nestle in the bosom of their mother earth. Affliction, even as death, cold and ruthless to our mortal hopes, is yet to the soul like winter to the world, the season of barrenness to the eye, but teeming with increase beneath its rugged surface ; for spring-time flowers and summer fruits are but the offspring of snows and of the ice-bound frost : even such is affliction, the parent of moral good."

"Kneel with me," said Copplestone ; "I will — I will try to pray."

"Thank God !" said Gertrude, and Hezekiah echoed her words in a voice of fervent piety. The criminal fell on his knees before his daughter ; clasped both his hands together ; and looked up, as he said, in a manner that would

have moved a heart of stone, “ Lord, forgive my sin ! ”

Gertrude sunk on her knees by his side ; and Hezekiah, willing to improve these moments of returning hope and of repentance, opened his Bible, and read with deep devotion, and in a tone of feeling, one of those sublime chapters from Job, that magnified the power and mercy of God. This done, long and ardently did he pray by the miserable culprit.

The hour at length arrived for their departure. Hezekiah, fearful to disturb the frame of mind into which he had led Copplestone, so as to fix all his hopes and feelings on a higher state, whispered Gertrude, advising her to say but a few words, and to make her farewell as brief and as silent as possible. She understood the motive, and bowed her head in token that she would obey him. “ My father, farewell ! ” she said ; “ I must leave you. I — I will come again ; I will see you to the last.”

“ Do so,” said Copplestone, “ or I shall fall again into despair. Farewell, my child ! I would bless you ; but I dare not, for my blessing,

may be, would turn into a curse : it would not be accepted."

Gertrude was about to reply, but Hezekiah forbade her by a look. He now gave into Copplestone's hand the Bible he had brought with him to the prison, and parted from the condemned criminal with these words —

"Heed not outward things ; heed not death ; for life is in your hand. Sorrow not for the loss of reputation ; for name and fame will not alone save a man : thou mayst be registered in honour, and yet be lost to truth. There is nothing can save thee, unless thou repentest of thy sin before God ; for he will not ask after thy name, but his own, to find if that be written in thy heart. Farewell ! consider these things ; and thy own conscience will tell thee thy state ; for conscience is like the Urim and Thummim on the breast of the priest, since it shines bright when it speaks God's commandments. Farewell ! may you seek mercy, and find it !"

Thus parted Hezekiah from Sir John Copplestone ; and as he and Gertrude left the cell, Colonel Holborn, and one or two of the com-

mittee-men for the estates of sequestered royalists, entered it, having some business of moment to transact with the prisoner, who had, during his career of wickedness, so zealously served the parliament and the cause of rebellion in the West.

CHAP. XXV.

—— 'Tis done — the cease of majesty
Dies not alone ; but, like a gulf, doth draw
What 's near it, with it : it is a massy wheel,
Fix'd on the summit of the highest mount,
To whose huge spokes ten thousand lesser things
Are mortised and adjoin'd ; which when it falls,
Each small annexment, petty consequence,
Attends the boist'rous ruin. SHAKSPEARE.

THERE now remains little for us to add, and that little, we fear, will scarcely prove satisfactory to the reader. But the fault is not ours, since truth compels us to state facts, though we do so with regret: — Sir John Copplestone, who had been condemned to death, and who so richly deserved that fate, did not, however, suffer the penalties of the law. He was saved by the iniquity of the times; for, having acted so zealous, indeed so treacherous, a part, in serving the powers that had chased the King from the throne, and afterwards ruled the land with a

rod of iron, his influence was so great with them, that, assisted by the intercession of his friends, he was suffered to purchase a pardon !

Prince, the biographer of Devon, states, that it “ cost Copplestone thirteen good manors in Cornwall, to buy out his pardon for the murder of his godson ;” that he (the writer) had seen the pardon ; which, in his day, was still carefully preserved, as a curiosity, at Warleigh House.*

But though Sir John Copplestone escaped the shame of a public execution, and life was spared to him ; the possession of it could scarcely be deemed desirable, unless he employed the space so granted, to make his peace with God. Be this as it may, he did not long survive. His character lost ; his villany the abhorrence of every honest or feeling mind ; he was shunned by all, excepting those who had found their political views and their despotism so much

* The author of these volumes has been informed that the pardon here mentioned is now in the possession of the Bamfield family, in the north of Devon ; to whom Warleigh belonged before it was purchased by the ancient Radcliffe family, its present possessors.

served by his means, that they still thought it well to show him some countenance after the pardon had been purchased; more especially as it was granted to him under the pretext of his having struck his godson in passion, being prompted to do so by irritating circumstances. A pretext so shallow deceived no one; and all men understood that to his political party, and to his money, Sir John Copplestone owed his life.

Warleigh estate was fined, but not confiscated, and still remained in his possession. Soon after the pardon had been obtained, Copplestone retired to Warleigh, where he led a strange and moody life; no longer busying himself in politics, nor in intrigues of any kind, and, apparently, taking no interest in any thing about him. He shunned all society, as much as he was himself shunned; and seldom conversed, even with those around him. Gertrude, who, whatever her own feelings might be, still continued near him, endeavoured to keep his mind fixed on religious thoughts and duties; but it was all in vain; the arrow had struck

deep that was to be his destruction — his own conscience allowed him no repose; and day and night dwelling upon one train of thinking, his reason became affected. He fell into that fitful, moody, and harrowing state of remorse, which, to a certain extent, produced melancholy madness, and in this state he remained till he died.

The circumstances of his death were never clearly known, since much pains was taken to conceal them. Some said he died suddenly, whilst visiting a particular and lonely spot he had discovered on his grounds, and which he daily made his haunt; and not a few declared that he had met his death by means more than natural, — the spirit of the murdered having risen to take vengeance on the murderer.

At this distance of time, it is quite impossible that we should be able to ascertain the real facts, when they were considered questionable even in the age in which they occurred. All that we can say is, that there was in Warleigh Tor a deep and dark cavern, or narrow excavation, in the rock, situated near its summit. In this lonely and miserable place Copplestone

was wont occasionally to hide or sequester himself from all human observation. The spot, however, was hardly known till after his death, —for there was he found dead. The body was removed with the utmost secrecy, and the funeral hurried over without the enquiry of an inquest; and many thought he had, in some strange way, died by his own hand. Be this as it may, he was buried as privately as possible; and soon after, his daughter, whose deepest sorrow was for his crimes, quitted England, and remained abroad nearly two years.

On her return to her native country she took possession of Warleigh by a double right; being not only the heiress of Copplestone, but the nearest surviving relative of the deceased Amias Radcliffe. After the restoration of Charles the Second to the throne, she gave her hand to the gallant Sir William Bastard, who had so nobly served the royal cause. Gertrude and her husband continued to reside at Warleigh, affording in their own persons an honourable example of that worthy conduct which, in possessors of large estates, becomes a blessing to all

around them : they were such, indeed, to the poor.

They lived long and happily together ; but this happiness in the mind of Gertrude was not unmixed with bitter feelings ; she could never forget the crimes of her father : a sense of their shame held her much apart from society ; for though she never refused mingling with it to do a good or a gracious action, yet she shunned all festive meetings, and all gaieties, as things repugnant to her feelings, and to the deep and enduring memory of her calamities ; so that in her case, innocent as she was, the wounded sensibilities of her own mind made it truly appear that the sins of the father had been visited, indeed, upon the child.

Sir Piers Edgcumbe (who was nearly ruined by the fines he had to pay in consequence of the part he took in the unfortunate Captain Burley's plan to rescue Charles the First from prison), after the death of his most beloved and injured King, quitted England, retired to the Continent and followed the fortunes of the exiled prince. On the restoration of his royal master,

he once more returned to his country, and recovered a considerable portion of his estates; amongst the rest, his matchless domain of Mount Edgcumbe, in Devon.

The lively Robina became the wife of the gallant Trelawny of Trelawn; and, faithful to her friend Agnes in joy as in sorrow, she expressed a wish that the same hour and altar that saw her become a wife, should, also, witness the happiness of Agnes. Elford ardently seconded the wish, and received her hand as the reward of his long and faithful affection. The faults of his temper had been much chastened by exile and affliction; so that he had become a more worthy, as well as more gentle, being. Soon after, he recovered and took possession of the estate of Sheep's Tor, as Sir Reginald Elford, in right of succession to his father's title and property; for that father had died, broken-hearted, abroad, never having held up his head after the murder of his gracious sovereign Charles the First. The cave in which Sir Marmaduke lay concealed amongst the rocks, was by Reginald held as a sacred and melancholy memorial of

his father's sufferings in the royal cause; and he is said once a year, on the anniversary of that father's death, to have visited the spot with feelings of reverence and regret.

Sir Hugh Piper and Cornet Davy continued to rub on together much as usual, taking the good and evil of human life with an equal spirit. Sir Hugh never grew rich, and never recovered any part of the property he had so liberally devoted to the service of the late King; but he always fancied he should do so, and was never in absolute want: for the rest, contentment supplied all; and he and the Cornet, though hope always led them to look for better times, cheered those that were present in smoking their pipes, and in dwelling on the past; and whilst they dwelt on that hopeful future which never rewarded them in this world, they would sometimes cheerfully remark, that though they could not do great things, they could always talk about them; so that, in fact, they were something like the poor man who was invited by the Barmicide to a feast, in the Arabian tales,—they were compelled to banquet on the luxuries of a lively

imagination : and this they often did, with more true delight than natures of a colder habit would have found in the full and real enjoyment of the highest honours and rewards. Their life was uniform in affection, and in death they were not divided ; for honest Davy survived his beloved master but two days, and both lie buried in Launceston church, in the county of Cornwall, where, not many months since, the writer of these pages went on pilgrimage to the tomb of the gallant-hearted Sir Hugh Piper.

The widow Raleigh had a small pension allowed her by Charles the Second, as an acknowledgment of her husband's faithful services to his father, in whose cause he lost his life. Little Mary grew up a beautiful girl, and inherited much of her father's genius and piety, and her mother's sweetness of disposition. She married a young clergyman, who afterwards, during the reign of William and Mary, became a bishop in that church, which, like the phoenix of old, might be said to have risen once more from its ashes ; to so low a state had it been reduced by fanaticism and rebellion.

Roger Rowle, and many of his men, tired of a lawless life, joined the army under General Monck; and, some time after, Roger died nobly in a long-contested field in Flanders.

Black Will did not escape so easily as the master he had betrayed; for, notwithstanding the hopes held out to him of pardon on his turning evidence for the prosecution, he was tried, found guilty, and executed as an accomplice in the murder of Sir Walter Radcliffe.

Of the fate of Dame Gee we know nothing: most probably it was far from a happy one, since there exist to this day some wild tales concerning her more than natural pretensions to work out good or evil: all these represent her as a character to be feared, but never to be respected.

The tree that witnessed the murder of Radcliffe is *still in existence*; it stands just without the churchyard of Tamerton Foliot; and to this day it is called *The Copplestone Oak*. The fearful story of the crime to which it was a silent witness, is even yet the theme of tradition

with the elders of the village. The cave where the body of Sir John was found in so mysterious a manner, likewise bears his name, being known by that of *Copplestone's Hale*. After dark, it is shunned by the peasantry, as a haunt of wicked and malignant spirits.

And though time has fled on with its usual swiftness, and generations have appeared and passed away in rapid succession, the memory of true heroism still finds a record. — The portrait of Gertrude Copplestone may still be seen, with that of her husband, Sir William Bastard, in the very hall, where, on the night of the twentieth of June, she displayed that noble courage and resolution, by which she saved his life, and most probably the lives of all the royalists who were there assembled and betrayed.

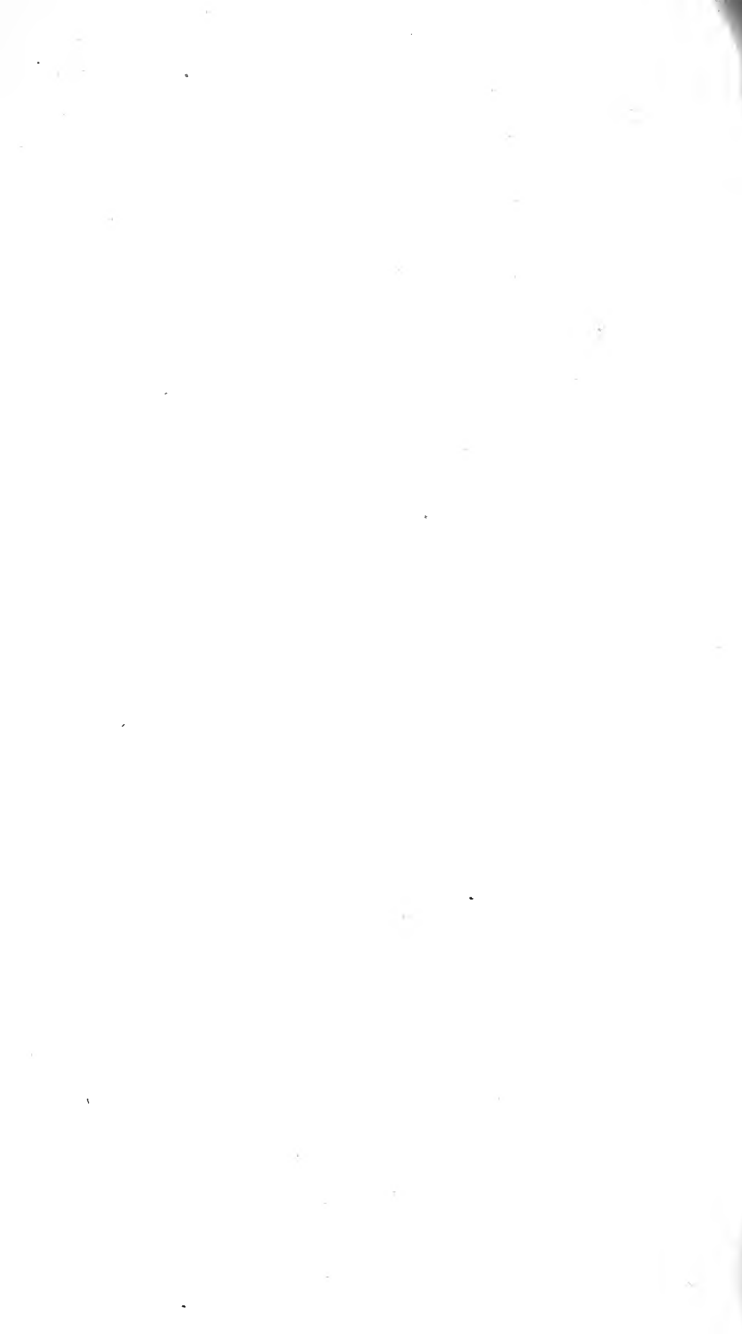
Guilty as her father might have been, the virtues of the daughter, in some degree, soften even the just indignation with which the memory of Copplestone is branded by posterity. And for her sake, we hope that the reader, who has gone with us through these pages in tracing

her career, should he ever visit this part of Devon, will look with an eye of feeling and of interest on the Copplestone oak, the village church of Tamerton, and the venerable woods and mansion of WARLEIGH.

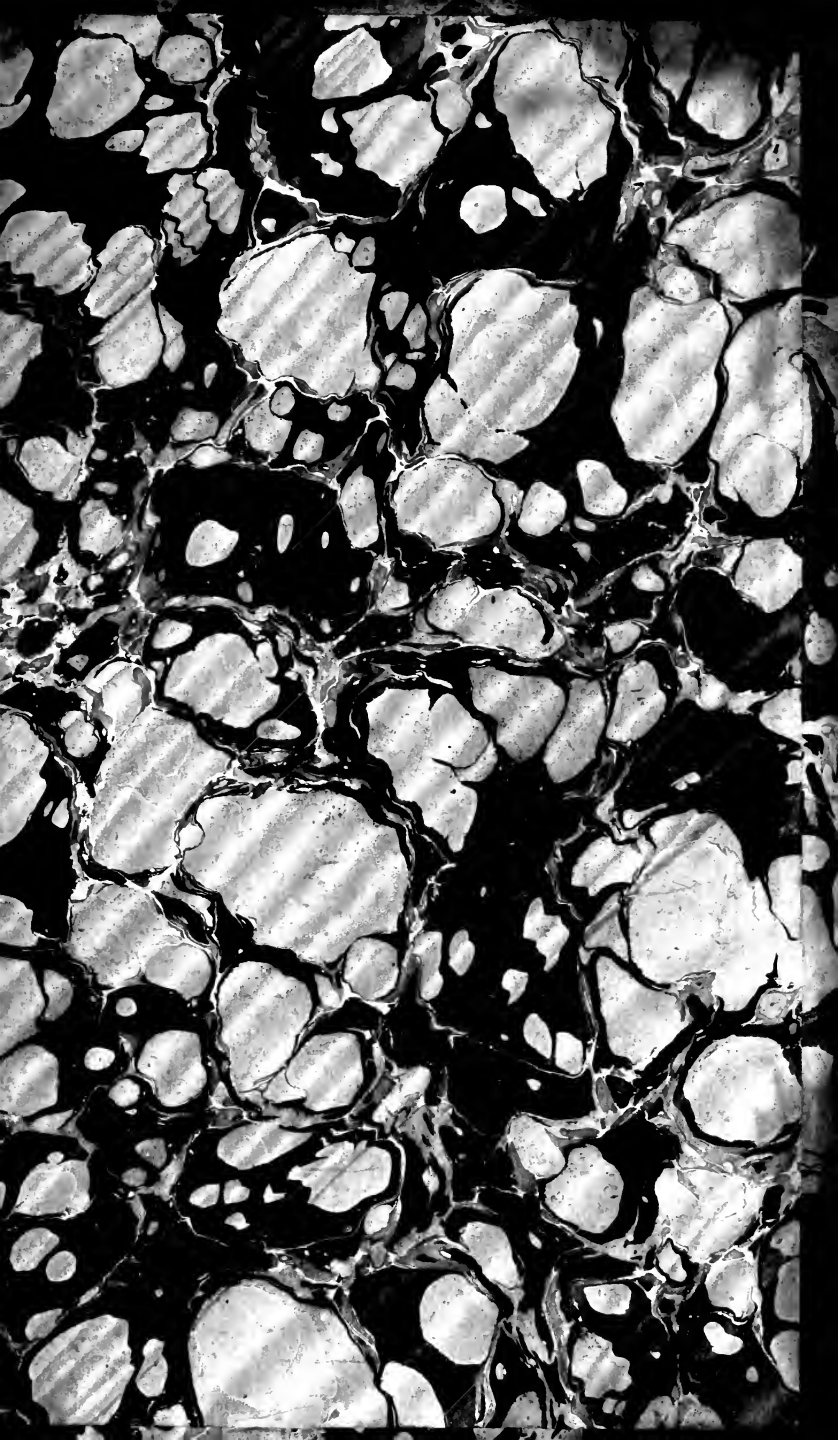
THE END.

LONDON :
Printed by A. SPOTTISWOODE,
New-Street-Square.









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